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BETWEEN LIKE-MINDED POWERS

THE fruits of Mr. Eden's visit to Moscow have ripened slowly, but in a form which entitles him to congratulation. The agreement with the U.S.S.R. which he laid before Parliament on Thursday should mark the beginning of a more intimate political collaboration between the two Powers on whom the happy settlement of Europe chiefly depends. That will be, even under the most fortunate conditions, the most perplexing tangle which statesmanship has ever had to unravel. Four conditions of success seem to us essential: first, a decisive victory over the Nazis; secondly, the encouragement of Germans who help in the liberation of their country and are capable of aiding in the task of reforming and rebuilding a more civilised Fatherland; thirdly, the help of America in organising an economic New Deal for the Old World; and, lastly, in furthering these ends, the friendly collaboration of the British, Russian and American Governments.

To ignore the immense difficulties that stand in the way would be to trifle. If, independently and frankly, official London and Moscow were each to sketch its aspirations on paper, there would be agreement on some matters of the first importance, but there would be a wide and potentially dangerous area of divergence. Wise men in such a case will stress the points of agreement. Each hopes above all for peace. Each wishes to promote in Germany the growth of non-aggressive influences. Each realises that Europe must be knit together in some system of collective security. Each sees in the economic prosperity of this Continent the pledge of its own security and progress. Somewhat in this way, we should guess Mr. Eden and Mr. Molotov must have gone to work in drafting this agreement. They have defined the ends that unite us. If there is sincerity we shall find a way of realising these aims, in which, by give and take, we can concur.

General as the new Treaty is, it is far from being platitudinous and it uses some terms new in the language of diplomacy. It is confined throughout to Europe, for the obvious reason that Russia is not yet involved in the Far Eastern war. It is significant in this connection that it treats Europe as a whole. Russia's sympathies and interests may link her more closely with the East than with the West, but there is, happily, no hint of any division into spheres of influence, which would be to our thinking a sinister solution. The assumption is throughout that the two Great Powers to which, with American aid, Europe must owe its liberation, will work together for a creative settlement of the whole complex problem. They are pledged already as military allies to conclude no separate peace. This undertaking is now completed, in positive language, by the clause which foresees the joint conclusion of peace with an unaggressive Germany. With what group or provisional organisation of Germans that will be, none of us can say: enough that it must be a group which satisfies both London and Moscow that it has turned its back on aggression. The implication of this clause is that at some stage, after the complete overthrow of the Nazis, we hope for a negotiated peace. The Agreement then goes on to outline the collaboration of the two Powers in the more distant future. Frontiers are not discussed; a phase reminiscent of the Atlantic Charter postpones these problems. Since a permanent system of security cannot be created in a hurry, it provides in the interim for mutual defence, if that should be required, against any European members of the Axis, up to a limit in time of twenty years. But throughout this interval, which will end, we hope, long before the two decades are up, the two Powers are pledged to work together for the creation of a supra-national organisation which shall ensure the prosperity as well as the safety of all "like-minded Powers". That novel phrase was one which we used six years ago, when we urged the conclusion of a quasi-federal alliance among "Like-minded Powers" to resist aggression and stave off war, with Britain, France and Russia at its head. Because it was not concluded then, most of them are now submerged, and this Agreement has to provide, while they are impotent, for the due consideration of their interests. It is a good outline. How we fill it in will depend not only on the valour of our two armies, but on the good sense and self-restraint both of British Conservatives and Russian Communists.

The Corporate State

The debate on Coal has been mere shadow boxing. Sir John Anderson introduced the Government's scheme with assurances that settle nothing after the war and with explanations that though he personally saw as long as a year ago that rationing would be necessary, it is to be postponed now as unnecessary. The arguments of Dr. Dalton and Sir Stafford Cripps, both of whom urged the urgency of rationing, have been in some mysterious way rebutted by the fact that the public was unpersuaded that rationing was really necessary. The public here, Sir John Anderson assured an openly ironic House, did not mean the 1922 Committee. Sir John did point out that the Government's scheme is an instalment of the Corporate State; he did not commend it on the ground that a basic industry was being organised, under wartime control, so that private ownership might be maintained whatever the cost to the nation, while the miners themselves were to be bought off by the offer of better wages and a sheltered and privileged position. This is the pattern which monopoly capitalism seeks to set up in every country. It averts none of the evils of capitalism; the main body of Labour, outside the sheltered corporations, remains a dispossessed and readily exploited reserve which, if necessary, is put into labour camps or drilled as cannon-fodder. By this device the forces demanding Socialism and the public good are divided and weakened. The solution cannot be stable or permanent. We know all about the Corporate State; it has never been approved when adopted in Italy or Germany.

Mr. Greenwood, for Labour, could do no more than adopt the scheme with a sad reluctance. The miners seem scarcely alive to the dangers. They are pressing one important amendment designed to remove the anomaly by which the colliery manager under the present scheme is the servant of two masters. Paid by the private owner, he is to take orders from the newly appointed Controller. He must be a strong and disinterested man if he is to work with unimpeded enthusiasm in these circumstances. But the Government seems under no obligation seriously to consider any of the amendments.

Battle Fronts

Though engagements of importance are taking place, this year's strategic pattern of the war has not yet definitively emerged. In the Western Hemisphere, the R.A.F., balancing the persistent U-boat toll of shipping, has temporarily reverted from attacks on the dramatic scale of the Cologne raid to attrition-bombing—less effective in terms of morale and proportionately more costly in aircraft—directed against the Ruhr and German ports. On the Russian front, Sebastopol, which the enemy is bent on taking at any cost may not be able to resist indefinitely. Either Timoshenko's "preventive" attack on Kharkov disrupted German preparations for an offensive or the High Command is in two minds as to the direction and extent of their long-promised victorious operation. Memories of Ludendorff's fateful gamble in 1918 may be an inhibiting factor, though the decision to venture all seems likely to be taken once more. In Libya armour pins armour, like knights on the desert chess-board; lesser pieces cannot develop their attack until the armoured divisions have worn each other down. No result in the grim and shapeless tank struggle in the "Cauldron" is yet discernible; and though Rommel seems unlikely now to break through with sufficient force to threaten Egypt, his mere repulse would be a barren victory for us if we could not exploit it without first replacing losses at the cost of an unwelcome demand for shipping on the long Cape route.

In the Eastern Hemisphere the Oriental member of the Axis would appear to be in some doubt whether the Occidental partners can be relied on to win and so merit support. Japanese propaganda no longer talks of joining hands with Germany and Italy at Suez; there is a significant absence of any fresh move by combined Japanese forces against either Bengal or Ceylon. Instead comes news of Japanese naval operations against Midway Island (where the U.S Air Arm achieved a substantial success) and against Dutch Harbour in the Aleutian Islands. The remarkable feature of the Midway engagement was that no contact was established between the battleships which now serve in this new type of naval warfare, mainly as an escort for aircraft carriers. These moves are consonant with a Japanese intention to postpone plans for westward expansion until the European odds are clearer, and to concentrate meanwhile on isolating and destroying the armies of Chiang Kai-Shek. The Burma Road is closed; the Japanese hope to prevent the United States from maintaining any flow of supplies into China by sea or air. So Japan endeavours to secure more Pacific bases and launches considerable forces in order to extend her Yangtse area of occupation by over-running Kiangsi and Chekiang. Already there is news of her capture of Kinhwa and the important aerodrome of Chuhsien, while other columns are advancing westwards from Nanchang and southwards towards Changsha. More was lost in Burma than British oil-investors' properties.

The Slaughtered Czechs

With the Iron Cross on its breast and Hitler's "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," the wraith of Heydrich has gone to join the fallen heroes who fill the Nazis' Valhalla, with the pimp Horst Wessel at their head. Brutality stands first among the virtues in their scheme of values: the dead man had earned his honours. But our concern is with the Czech martyrs who have been slaughtered over his grave. They number already three hundred souls, and an entire village has been wiped out. Many were the intellectual leaders of this nation, professors, scientists and teachers. This is the Tarquin policy: Hitler, too, may wish that this people had but one head, that he might cut it off. His reckoning may follow two lines of calculation. Such ruthlessness may possibly act as a deterrent. But in any event it serves to degrade and emasculate a virile stock which does not easily drop into the abject place reserved for it in the New Order. On the balance, civilisation has suffered by this affair, yet we do not believe that the cause of the barbarians has gained. The murdered man may have been as formidable as he was vile, but his removal was not worth the lives of half a dozen good Czechs, to say nothing of three hundred. That is so obvious that the question arises: Were the murderers really Czechs? In the last phase of the Tsarist Police-Empire, most of the terrorist assassinations were organised by the policeman Azev, who purged one faction of the corrupt ruling caste in the interests of its rival. Morally that is equally conceivable in the Nazi thugocracy. However this may be, the chief effects that concern us are that a fine race is being decimated, and memories engendered which will set a flaming sword of hate between Czechs and Germans for generations to come. It does not console us to reflect that the United Nations have sworn to exact retribution for such Nazi crimes. Blood does not wash out blood. Nothing will purge away this record save a German revolution that brings with it a moral renaissance.

Home Front *(by an Industrial Correspondent)*

The more one considers the *affaire* Lyttelton, the more extraordinary it seems. The extraordinary thing is not that the Minister of Production has gone away to confer with his opposite number in the United States; for at the time of his appointment we were told to expect that. What is odd is that he has gone away without setting up the regional production machinery which it was to be among his principal functions to establish, and that apparently nothing whatever is to be done about the machinery until after his return. Consequently, so far from having more regional control over production than there used to be, we now have less; for Mr. Lyttelton has duly collected the resignations of the employers and workers who sat on the old Regional Boards, and has appointed nobody in their place. How and why has this been allowed to happen? It was known some weeks ago that the Minister of Production had refused to carry out the full recommendations of the Citrine Committee, and was prepared to compose the regional executives exclusively of departmental officials, without any representatives of either employers or workers. There was a case for doing this: for assuredly the notion of sharing every sort of post between an employers' and a workers' nominee has been very much overdone. But the case for rejecting the Citrine proposals was the case, not for doing nothing, but for putting in as Regional Controllers the strongest men who could be found, and for giving them full power to knock the heads of the departmental representatives together. Nobody, I think, expected that the outcome would be the creation of a vacuum—no Regional Boards, no Regional Controllers, no anything except the separate representations of the different departments. Rumour says that the reason for this astonishing failure to act is that the departments are kicking harder than ever against anyone being given any overriding executive authority, and are trying to reduce the Minister of Production to no more than a second edition of the discarded Production Executive. In effect, it appears that the net result of the great crisis over production of a few months back has been, not to secure better co-ordination, but worse confusion than ever.

* * *

This, indeed, is all-of-a-piece with what has happened over coal. The Lord only knows how a scheme which gives control of production to regional Coal Controllers without any sort of policy of management or procedure is supposed to work. One suspects very strongly that it is not supposed to work at all, in any respect in which important colliery interests object to it. What, for example, is to happen if the Regional Controller wants to take out the barrier coal that has been left underground between two pits belonging to different concerns? What is to happen if he proposes to close a pit, and to transfer the miners and perhaps some of the machinery elsewhere? Is he to wait until any such question can be settled by voluntary agreement, or is he in fact (there is, of course, no doubt of his having the power, for the Government has had that all along) to impose the settlement he thinks desirable in the public interest? If he is to impose a settlement, are colliery owners who lose by it to be compensated at the public expense, while those who gain by it are to be let alone? To these, and to many other very pertinent questions, neither the White Paper nor anything that has been said in support of it furnishes any answer at all. We are weeping no tears over the rejection of the miners' own scheme; for we cannot imagine that a joint council of owners and miners would be in the least likely to run the mines either with technical efficiency or in the national interest. What I complain of is that the scheme that has been adopted is not even a compromise: it is a burking of all the real issues. It might be quite a good scheme, if the new Government Controllers, centrally and regionally, used all the powers which the Government has possessed all along under the Defence Regulations, and were backed by the Cabinet in using those powers. But that seems a highly improbable outcome. Most people take it for granted that the colliery owners have won this round hands down; and I can see no reason for supposing that the commonly received opinion is wrong.

West Africa

Lord Swinton, as Minister for West Africa, will have to co-operate with the Equatorial African Free French and to deal with the menace of Dakar and the Atlantic bulge under increasing Nazi influence. In British West Africa will his business background encourage him to curb the monopolistic greed of the great merchant companies? Meantime, Nigeria has followed Kenya in imposing forced labour. The reason is tin: the Nigerian tin output is crucially important since the loss of Malaya. But consider these figures. There are 800,000 able-bodied Nigerian men surplus to the essential agriculture and industry of the territory. Only 200,000 of them are in wage-earning jobs; and of those 46,000 are in the mines. Suppose the mine strength be raised to 100,000; there would still be over half a million Nigerians available for paid work. What is wrong with the local conditions or pay that the miners cannot be engaged voluntarily? There are two points here which need attention: the Niger Company, which receives half the royalties from minerals, ought not to profit from the product of forced labour; the extra profits earned should be appropriated by the Nigerian Government and used for native welfare. And the arguments in favour of forced labour in the Empire based on analogy with conscription here are false; we have conscription because the M.P.s we elected voted for it. None of the subject nations is self-governing: conscript labour is, for them, literally enforced.

New Honours

The "Prime Minister's List" of Birthday Honours is headed by the name of Mr. Keynes. This is indeed an *amende honorable* from the one-time Chancellor of the Exchequer who, misguided by the deflationists of the Bank of England, provoked Mr. Keynes to write *The Economic Consequences of Mr. Churchill*. We look forward to the new Peer's interventions in their Lordships' debates. The only other honour, apart from the very proper O.M.s for Augustus John and Professor Adrian, that calls for comment is Mr. Korda's knighthood. In England men have been producing magnificent films about the war: why has this honour gone to none of these, but to a gentleman who produces escapist films in Hollywood?

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SPEAKING OF SECURITY . . .

WHILE even the most advanced members of the British Cabinet seem still subject to an official taboo on any but the most vague reference to the post-war future, we have the satisfaction of listening to their American counterparts. The New Deal administration knows its own mind, and its spokesmen from Vice-President Wallace to Mr. Winant have always something definite to say. Was he the first ambassador of a Great Power to address the Durham miners in their own hall? Not the least interesting of these speeches came the other day from Mr. Sumner Welles, all the more remarkable because he is a permanent official, commonly regarded as a conservative in his outlook. He began by forecasting that the war will be followed by a long "armistice" period, during which the United States will share with the other victors the duty of policing the world. During this interim period America will take her share in working out plans for "that permanent system of general security promised by the Atlantic Charter." He went on to talk very plainly to his fellow-citizens about their duty to assume in the future the international burdens and responsibilities that correspond to their unrivalled resources. This sketch of the political future, though it is the merest outline, serves as a useful complement to the speeches of Mr. Wallace and Mr. Perkins, who had dwelt on the economic aspects of the international New Deal to which they look forward.

The suggestion of a long interim "armistice" period of preparation before we attempt to build the permanent structure of the future world has a great deal to recommend it, and is widely accepted in this country. The planning of the League dealt in an abstract way with juridical concepts. Before we plan next time, let us have some picture of the realities before us. Few of us to-day would dare even to guess what sort of political or economic pattern Europe or Asia will present to our eyes, when hostilities cease. Will Germany be a Soviet Republic, a democracy of sorts, a satrapy of Big Business, or merely a numbed chaos under armies of occupation? Japan is a mark of interrogation. Will India, capable of action, be heading towards independence? And what sort of France, what sort of Italy will face us? Will the U.S.S.R. be absorbed in her own problems of rebuilding, or will she consent to play in the councils of the United Nations as great a part as her armies have played in the field? And what finally will be the mood of the American people? The common assumption among us hitherto has been that Congress will still be averse to any covenants or commitments that involve any surrender of its jealously guarded sovereignty. That is not the forecast of Mr. Welles, as we read his speech. For what new departures beyond their own borders and their own hemisphere Americans will be ready should be clearer after the Presidential election of 1944. In short, a rather lengthy armistice period is essential, in order that we may plan realistically, and allow public opinion time to adjust itself to the new world that will emerge from this earthquake.

Mr. Welles' speech is welcome for another reason. We confess that in reading over the Atlantic Charter we had never taken very seriously the vague reference in its eighth clause to "a wider and permanent system of general security." It seemed to lie in the infinitely distant future. All that the authors of this document had clearly in mind was that they meant after the war to retain their own arms, and were resolved to disarm the Axis Powers. As a programme for an armistice period, however prolonged it may be, that is inevitable. But as a scheme for world-government stretching into an indefinite future, it would be intolerable. It would mean that the chief victors, the U.S.A., the U.S.S.R., and Great Britain were claiming a monopoly of military power. Such power as the lesser allies may possess can be disregarded, since they lack the industrial equipment of the three leading Powers and must depend on them for any adequate supply of modern arms—a remark which applies even to China, in spite of her colossal man-power. No professions of disinterestedness, however eloquent and sincere, could disguise the fact that this is in effect a formula for the dictatorship of these three Powers. It was put nakedly the other day by Lord Brabazon when he proposed that they should retain a monopoly of air-power. That means, in plain words, that Washington, London and Moscow should reserve to themselves the exclusive right to bomb mankind into obedience. In that crude form the proposition is an absurdity which need not detain us. In fact it is highly probable that we shall "lend-lease" planes in considerable numbers to all the minor allies. Industry, British and American, will be only too eager to supply them. That will alter nothing in the real distribution of power. This will lie to-morrow where it lies to-day—with the three Powers which alone could launch a thousand-plane raid with machines of their own manufacture—and keep it up. It is far too early to start discussing what "a wider and permanent system of security" ought to mean. But it cannot mean a monopoly of power which three Governments are free to use at their own discretion. However difficult the conception may seem in the barbaric atmosphere of to-day, it ought to mean that the ownership and use of military power shall be effectively internationalised. The speech of Mr. Sumner Welles is welcome, because we infer from it that the American Government is not content to prolong the era of unchecked dictatorship indefinitely. The tendency a year ago was to assume too readily that the United States will never participate in any scheme of international government that required an institutional structure. That assumption led to some rather sinister talk about the "leadership" of the English-speaking Powers: London and Washington would arrive at joint decisions in informal talks: the rest of the world would have the felicity of adjusting itself to their conclusions as best it might. Without raising the awkward question of the eventual place of the German people in the future international structure, it is enough to say that an equal share belongs to the Russians, that China is now a leading Power, and that the French have proud memories behind them. The circle must be widened far beyond the English-speaking group. Some two or three years may elapse after the armistice before we can think of raising a permanent structure of security, but the hope of it must not be postponed till it becomes the fading vision of a few idealists and the daily joke of the man in the street.

Our chief concern is, however, rather with this interim "armistice" period, which, as Mr. Welles foresees, may well be prolonged. During this two or three years, decisions, economic as well as political, will have to be taken which may shape the future for a generation to come. We referred to some of them last week. When the German yoke is broken in Europe, the decisive factor will be that the victors, but specifically the United States and the Dominions, will hold at their disposal stocks of food and raw materials for the needs of the occupied countries and the defeated enemy populations. In allocating these supplies, but more especially the raw materials, it is obvious that we must deal with provisional local administrations. The group which we recognise for this purpose will then enjoy an exclusive power to shape its country's future, since it will dispose of the means of life and work. Whether that country will in a provisional way organise itself on a democratic, a Socialist or a Clerico-Fascist pattern will depend mainly on the choice we make in the early weeks after the cessation of hostilities of the agencies which shall dispense our supplies. There will be prominent industrialists in Germany, Italy and France, of the type known as "moderate," who will be eager to assume power for their own ends, directly or through their subordinate lawyers and journalists. There will be generals of the same type, ready to form from the defeated armies a police force to hold the workers down. Overnight in the factories it is probable that these same workers will have formed their councils, and the same thing may happen in the broken army. Men trained in the hard school of the underground struggle will soon emerge to organise these local popular groups on a national scale. Which of these three alternatives shall we favour?

The problem may present itself first of all as one of police. But if the armistice stage lasts, as it well may, for three years or so, a world-wide industrial crisis will confront us within a few months. Work will have to be found not merely for the demobilised industries of our own country and the United States, but for those of the occupied and enemy countries also. We hope that long-range plans will be fostered on the model of the Tennessee Valley Authority, which might well be adapted, as the *Times* has suggested, to the needs of the Danubian peasantry. But long before anything on this elaborate scale can be attempted, textile factories will be clamouring for cotton and wool, and the heavy industries for iron and steel. Again, the local authority which we entrust with the distribution of imported raw materials will hold the decisive political power in its hands. With our cotton and our iron-ore we shall be building the future Europe on lines which will fatally determine its political shape. What is done in these early months will determine the future; any subsequent conference on "security" will only be able to ratify or stereotype the lasting results of these early arrangements. Unless within the next year those of us who intend that the future, to use Mr. Wallace's phrase, shall belong to "the common man" can mobilise and co-ordinate our forces in Washington, London and Moscow, the shaping work will be done behind the scenes, without our knowledge, by controllers who act for monopoly capitalism.

UNDERGROUND POLAND CALLING

IN the present world struggle there are two main centres of resistance to the barbarism which menaces the freedom of the world. One of these centres is overt—it is found in the ever-growing determination of Britain and her Empire, in the crescendo of the American war effort, and in the stubborn resistance of Russia. The other centre is hidden and held in check, but for that all the more capable of a sudden expansion, in the Europe trampled under the Nazi heel.

Poland is one of the focal points of latent revolution against the slavery imposed upon Europe. The Polish secret press provides us with the best source of information about the present resistance in Poland.

There are more than seventy secret papers published in Poland to-day. In one of them, the *Polish Commonwealth*, of October 31, 1941, there was an article about the two Polish armies now fighting the enemy. First, there are the Polish sea, air and land forces fighting in distant lands. But "the part of the second army is a harder one," says this paper, printed under the constant threat of the Gestapo. "In its ranks we find grey-haired men, thousands of women, whose courage and self-sacrifice are deeply inspiring, young boys and girls hardly out of their childhood. . . . Quietly and anonymously, without badges or uniforms, in the shadows of conspiracy, they face deadly peril each day. . . . Many of them fall by the hand of the enemy, many of them are sent to the prisons and concentration camps of the Gestapo. The rest continue their march, and will march until the day of victory."

Here are a few details about the Polish secret press, the most explicit expression of Poland's underground resistance. The number of secret papers published in Poland varies according to the reprisals taken by the Gestapo. Since the suppression of the Polish legal Press by the German authorities some 150 secret periodicals

have made their appearance at different periods. In the autumn of 1941 the figure of newspapers which appeared regularly fell to 43, and now it has risen again by almost double. The names of these papers reflect the feelings of the people—here are some of them: *The Voice of Freedom, Pioneer, The Vigil, Fighting Poland, The Road to Freedom, Poland Lives, The Struggle Endures, Army and Independence, The Rampart, Reveille, We Fight for Truth and Poland*, etc.

Long lists of contributions from readers testify to the material difficulties with which the editors have to contend. Naturally no names whatever are given, as anything of this kind would constitute a death-sentence to the person involved.

The pseudonyms sound strange, but they speak eloquently of the thoughts and lives of those whom they protect. We find such names as "Pessimist" or "Be Careful," "Victory," "Gdynia" or "Spitfire." Some of the names have a derisory tone such as "Ribbentrop" or "Mussolini." Many small penny contributions are sent in by children, and we often come across such items as "Conscience money for 'bus-tickets." Street urchins often ride on 'buses without buying a ticket, and they send the money thus saved to the funds of the secret press. At the end of one list, which contains altogether 214 items, we find the most moving contributions: Two loaves of bread. Twelve ounces of sausage. Four ounces of butter. Twenty cigarettes. Four eggs. Fifteen chops. . . .

The first stage in this work is the creation of a paper and its editing—the second is the distribution. On the front page of many papers one reads: "Be mindful of the efforts made by the printers and distributors—give this paper into safe hands—do not destroy it." And here are a few extracts from the instructions for the distributors of a secret paper: "What are the essential qualifications for the distributor of a secret paper? Above all, he must be a man of great character. He must be a fervent patriot, who has overcome ordinary, human fear, well-balanced and imperturbable . . . A permanent subscriber to the paper ceases to be a private person, he is in the service of the nation." "You, the receiver of the paper, and the man who passed it to you, should be the only ones to know how it came into your hands. You should not know more than your hand can grasp . . . men can perish, but the work must go on until it ends in victory."

One of the main tasks of the secret press is to inform the country of events abroad. Such news is published accurately and with little delay. For instance, the full text of Mr. Churchill's speech of January 27, 1942, was printed in the *Polish News*, published secretly in Poland, as early as January 29, 1942.

Any news of unpleasant consequence for Germany is sought after eagerly. Events on the eastern front are followed with keen interest. Momentous events all over the world, such as the Pacific war and the arms drive in England and America, are followed objectively by Polish journalists.

The Polish secret press devotes much space to news from the anti-German underground front in Europe. There is a growing feeling of unity between all the countries enslaved by Germany, and plans for the preservation of such unity in the future are keenly discussed, particularly with regard to a practical federation of Central Europe.

All these papers contain detailed articles dealing with the internal economic and social problems which Poland will have to face in the future. "We fight for a Polish state, whose supreme aim will be to serve all its citizens. This state will be organised according to the will of the greater number, for the benefit of one and all," says the *Free Poland* of January 28, 1942. "All unfair social inequalities must disappear," says a paper published by the trades unions.

Every political group now active in underground Poland publishes several, and sometimes even a score, of papers, in different parts of the country. These groups exchange views and discuss practical policy—from this interchange a uniform, coherent and positive picture of future Poland is already arising.

The prevailing tone of the secret press in Poland is simple and invigorating. No words are wasted, nor is there room for empty phrase-making in its closely printed sheets. German persecutions and reprisals are hardly mentioned, as they are in any case a part of daily life for the readers, who instead long for war news, and constructive plans for the future.

Members of the secret organisations are the main object of Gestapo reprisals. The editors and distributors of these papers, if caught red-handed, are sometimes publicly beheaded as a warning to the population. The gallows and the guillotine are among the newest adornments in most Polish towns. In spite of all, however, the secret press preserves its tone of calm and optimism, and even indulges in humorous reflections.

A number of comic papers, copiously illustrated and sharply witty, appear regularly. Even the most serious papers print humorous anecdotes—for instance, one of the most important secret papers, *To-morrow*, printed a short item entitled "Keep Smiling," at the time of the unsuccessful German collection of skis and fur-coats, which the Poles preferred to destroy rather than to surrender to the authorities. It said:

"The furs are to be distributed according to the following schedule: German generals on the Moscow front to receive silver fox capes; colonels to receive caracul cloaks; other officers to receive full-skirted sealskin coats . . . General Governor Frank is to receive a film-star's ermine capes, while the Fuehrer himself will wait for the chinchilla robe of the Queen of England!" For Christmas, the comic paper *Lipa* wished Hitler "as many allies as possible, each of them as useful as Mussolini."

These Polish journalists work amidst extreme danger—some of them perish, but others fill their places, and they continue their work with unfailing courage and patience. The work of this press is one only of the practical expressions of underground resistance in Poland, and should fill us with confidence in the future contribution of a free Poland to a constructive order in free Europe.

ANNA ZAJACZKOWSKA

CASH OR KIND?

MANY people seem attracted by the proposal that Family Allowances for children should be given not in cash but in kind, through free school meals and/or free coupons for specified goods. The supposed merits are (1) to lessen the risk that the system may react unfavourably on wage-rates; (2) to facilitate economic planning by enabling the State to predict and arrange for the supply of the needed commoditjes; (3) to secure a physiologically satisfactory child-dietary; (4) to guard against parental misappropriation or mis-spending.

As to the first point, the argument that State-paid cash allowances would impede wage negotiations by weakening the humanitarian appeal of the children's needs was decisively repudiated by the majority report of the Joint Committee of the T.U.C. and the Labour Party in 1930. Since then, Labour opinion has moved steadily in the same direction, though a few Trade Union leaders still hold to their objection. But even supposing the risk to be real, is it likely that a nation-wide, State-paid system of coupons or free meals would be any less used than cash allowances to induce a vague belief that "the poor have so much done for them."

As to the practicability of the proposal, it presents a dilemma. Either its working out will be so bald and rough-and-ready as to sacrifice its supposed merits; or it will be so complicated as to require a costly and vexatious addition to the existing hordes of officials and multiplicity of forms. Here are some of the difficulties.

Obviously school feeding alone could not meet the need. Last October, the proclaimed "target" of the authorities was to extend school dinners to cover one million children, i.e. one-fifth of the school population. To cover the other four-fifths, plus the "under fives" not at school, plus the whole lot on non-school days, would require an extension of buildings and staff so great as to be impossible in wartime.

How would a free coupon system fit in with this limited school feeding? Would some school children enjoy both? What would the coupons provide? Would they be exchangeable (1) for all the generally rationed foods, i.e., meat even for toddlers, but no fish, vegetables or fruit, or (2) for these foods also, involving an immensely difficult extension of rationing and "points," or (3) for whatever food the mother chose up to the total assigned value?

How will the coupon system be adjusted to the infinite varieties of wartime circumstances, and to the unpredictable bounties of nature, e.g., abundance of fish and fruit in certain times and places; some parents able, others unable, to keep gardens or poultry, to buy cheaply at near-by markets, or exchange with neighbours? Would not the plan result in excessive or over-costly provision of food in many households, while leaving unsatisfied the perhaps greater need for better housing, heating and lighting, equipment, holidays, etc. Many social workers testify that the very poor suffer more from these deficiencies than from food shortage. Food, being the most clamant need, is that which the mother contrives to satisfy somehow, and nearly as well as her means permit.

As to what constitutes the perfect dietary, medical opinions differ and change, so do the needs of individual children. But the British Medical Association, reported that: "the average housewife, with no expert knowledge of calories, proteins, etc., does in fact purchase by rule-of-thumb methods foodstuffs which broadly approximate to dietaries considered by physiologists to be satisfactory." But this "*is subject to her purchasing powers proving adequate to the needs of her family.*" The legitimate conclusion is that the mother may be the best person to achieve a workable compromise between the dictates of medical science, the individual peculiarities of her children, and the limitations imposed on her purchases not only by her means, but by what is available.

The strange thing about the proposal for provision in kind is that the very people who sponsor it, apparently believing in the possibilities of an all-wise, all-powerful, paternal Government, are usually the most critical of governmental machinery as it exists, and also the most condemnatory—where others than mere mothers and children are concerned—of the truck system and the soup-kitchen mind. They had better ask themselves two questions. First: "How would you like it yourself?" if a substantial part of your families' income were paid you in kind, on the ground that "the Government knows best" what is good for you and your children. You may reply, if you are a parent, that you are quite willing for your children's allowances to be paid in kind, but isn't that because you know that you will be able to meet their supplementary needs out of your other resources? Secondly: "Is it really necessary?" Cannot the great majority of parents be trusted to know best how to spend the child's share of the national income? No doubt the minority of really selfish fathers will appropriate the allowance by reducing correspondingly the share of their wages now handed to their wives for housekeeping. Payment in kind is no safeguard against that. No doubt drunken or hopelessly incompetent mothers will waste or muddle away the allowance. But it will be easier to deal with such parents under the existing laws against child-neglect, once their present excuse of "my poverty and not my will consents" has been taken away from them. So far as ignorance and not ill-will is to blame, it can better be combated by educating mothers how to use their purchasing power than by choosing for them.

ELEANOR RATHBONE

A LONDON DIARY

THE British alliance with the Soviet Union is now so firm that I doubt if any lobbying, intriguing and reactionary propaganda will affect the flow of supplies to Soviet Russia or persuade people to distrust the strength and will of the U.S.S.R. But I am not sorry that I have been to some trouble during recent weeks to discover who is who in this business. The most serious side of this matter comes to my ears from the City, where I hear of influential people seeking money to counteract "the Left tendency" that they notice in politics as a result of the war, and, in particular, of the Russian part in it. I need scarcely point out that while there are dangers in irresponsible, independent candidates running for Parliament, the real danger only begins when big Conservative money is put behind candidates and propaganda whose tendency is apparently Leftish, but really Fascist. That may not be clearly envisaged at present. I do not know. Some of the people I refer to merely want to puncture existing enthusiasm for the Soviet Union; others are already thinking in terms of the domestic position after the war.

* * *

Is some anti-Soviet influence, for instance, making use of Major Victor Cazalet, M.P.? He went to Russia as liaison officer to General Sikorski. I am told that the Cazalet family once had large sums of money in Tsarist Russia. But that could scarcely be a reason for doing liaison work for the Poles. On his return he circulated to 300 selected people a little privately printed book, some extracts from which were reprinted by an angry press. They were not likely to improve our relations with the U.S.S.R. Since then someone seems to have done a lot of lobbying. Ten days ago friends of his were claiming that they had a minimum of 62 M.P.s lined up on a policy which is certainly not that of the British Government towards the Soviet Union. They claim to have taken a deputation of 18 M.P.s to exert pressure upon the Foreign Secretary, and they name supporters ranging from Mr. Erskine Hill, of the 1922 Committee, to Mr. Voigt, and from Lord Kemsley to Harold Nicolson. Perhaps Mr. Nicolson's name only came into it because of a singularly ill-judged article in the *Spectator*, in which he suggested the Soviet Union might be open to bribes from Hitler to make a separate peace? The odd thing was that his deduction from this was not, as one would have expected, that we should take all necessary action to assure Stalin of the honesty of our alliance. Mr. Nicolson is a man of experience; his article puzzled his friends and pleased his enemies.

* * *

There appears further to be some kind of alliance or understanding between the Cazalet group and the Vansittartites. Scratch a Vansittartite and you are apt to find not so much an anti-German as an anti-Bolshevik. Mr. Voigt's writing in the *Nineteenth Century* displays the double tendency. You will recall his extraordinary statement that it was easier for us to fight Germany and Russia together than Germany alone. Now he is horrified at the possibility that the Baltic States might fall under Russian occupation again after the war and suggests that seriously to oppose this policy one must have a Vansittart attitude towards Germany. "If the German danger is eliminated for ever then the Russian claim to the Baltic States on the grounds of security loses its force." This is the oddest of arguments, for "to eliminate the German danger for ever" would seem to involve some form of collective security or the permanent domination of eastern Europe by the Soviet Union. No doubt it is coincidence that last week there should appear the most surprising issue of the Imperial Policy Group's *Review of World Affairs*. This group, whose extravagantly reactionary ideas took shape during the Spanish War, includes Lord Phillimore (Chairman), Kenneth de Courcy (Secretary), and people like Mr. Victor Raikes, M.P., and Major A. R. West. In this issue Mr. de Courcy suggests that we can view the possible discomfiture of Russia "with some measure of detachment."

* * *

This and the rest of Mr. de Courcy's argument was discussed with some vigour in the *News Chronicle* by A. J. Cummings, who went on also to comment on Miss Macaulay's letter last week in this journal. He remarked that she need not worry much about "Soviet worship"—that is, about the inability of Communists, brain-trusters or otherwise, to consider any questions involving the slightest criticism of the U.S.S.R.—because there are still preposterous anti-Soviet people to counteract such tendencies. I feel this is not an adequate reply; for in propaganda two partisan statements do not make one sensible attitude. I see that the Anglo-Soviet Public Relations Association began this week an informative series of lectures on the U.S.S.R. by responsible experts, including Maurice Dobb and Sir John Russell. Tickets from 30 Maiden Lane, W.C.2.

* * *

The tenth of June is a black day in Italian history. On June 10, 1924, Matteotti was murdered; on June 10, 1937, Roselli was murdered; and on June 10, 1940, Italy came into the European war. The tenth of June, 1942, is properly chosen for the celebration of Italy's change of luck. For the meeting in Caxton Hall that night exemplifies the unity of the anti-Fascist forces which have their organisation both inside and outside Italy. This organisation includes all groups, from the extreme Left to exiles as officially accepted as Count Sforza and Don Sturzo. It includes members of the Garibaldi battalion which fought with such distinction in Spain, members of the Roselli family, Socialists, Catholics, Conservatives and Liberals of every type. The movement is strongly organised in Mexico and in other countries. It has been hard to build this Popular Front because the Italian anti-Fascist organisation was smashed up when France fell. Its headquarters, its anti-Fascist army, were centred in France. Now to-day and at last we welcome with enthusiasm the formation of a united body of anti-Fascists. If the same thing could be achieved for the Austrians, for instance, and above all for the German exiles, we should see more clearly a way through our problems.

* * *

I have before me two pamphlets on India. Both are lavish in their expenditure of paper; both are illustrated with numerous photographs on a fine shiny surface. Neither of them mentions any price. I deduce from these facts and from their contents that both are official propaganda sponsored by the Ministry of Information. The first is called *A Picture of India*, by Mr. Edwin Haward, the Englishman who came in late on the recent Indian Round Table discussions on the B.B.C. Mr. Haward was at one time editor of the *North China Daily News*; his point of view is very British, but not Blimpish. He states the British case, not unfairly. As propaganda it should be compared with the second pamphlet by Sir George Dunbar, Bt. The mind behind his *India at War* stopped at the Boer War and has noticed nothing in India since the Mutiny. I wish the author could see the anotations in the margin written by the soldier who sent it to me. Why say that directly war broke out "the people of India unhesitatingly rose to the emergency?" How does anyone write about "the vast resources" of India and the meeting of the Eastern Group Conference to develop them without mentioning that the people of India were never consulted about coming into the war or having their resources used for it? The serious trouble is that Sir George Dunbar is, no doubt, quite unaware that he is saying anything to anger an Indian Nationalist. If I told him in all seriousness that this habit of writing India's history as part of Britain's history was much more likely to cause sedition in India than all the works of Marx and Lenin put together, he would think that I was pulling his leg.

When I first knew William Mellor just after the last war he had already made his name at Oxford and in the old Fabian Research Department. The work he did then on the Trade Union movement led to the formation of the National Guilds League, which was the big new idea in Socialism in 1919–21. He became industrial editor and then editor of the *Daily Herald*; later he worked with Cripps in the Socialist League and became editor of the *Tribune*. He was one of the few hundred-per-centers for Socialism: a tough, aggressive speaker, with, I think, very few other ambitions in life except to see Socialism win. On the surface he was a frustrated, dour, forbidding person, but humanity kept breaking in with a sudden smile and a light in the eye that transformed the whole landscape. I never knew a man whose humour, kindliness and generosity of temperament were less cunningly hidden by a tough manner. The superficiality of the toughness made you laugh: the laugh you shared with Mellor.

* * *

The German Ministry of Propaganda has practised restraint, not to say understatement, in its reporting of the Cologne raid for foreign consumption. They broadcast on June 1st to Spain that "the English sent a few planes to the old city of Cologne"; and to us, "By reliable technical methods the German defences ascertained that the actual number of planes on the district of Cologne did not exceed 70." The next day they were more lavish: 150 bombers were reported to Rumania, several hundred to Hungary. Another message in the *Dienst aus Deutschland* compared the raids to the former German attacks on England. On the 4th a quaver was audible in the broadcasts to Britain and the United States: "Naturally it is impossible to bring absolutely water-tight evidence disproving the British claims, for there is no one, either in Britain—apart from the highest authorities—or in Germany, who personally saw, let alone counted, all the planes taking part in the attack!"

* * *

A queer cross-section of life is seen in the dock at quarter sessions. At Norwich the other day (a correspondent who was present tells me) a youth was charged with breaking into a house and stealing £500. When the police arrested him the greater part of the money was still in his possession, and in a letter to the court, expressing contrition for what he had done, he requested that the £460 or so which was found on him might be handed over to charity! No doubt he considered that, having served his sentence, the money would remain his own, and that by this magnificent gesture he would re-establish himself in public opinion. On the same day at the same court a youth who was the leader of a criminal gang, most of them older than himself, pleaded guilty to thieving. On the testimony of the police he was a thoroughly bad lot. What was to be done with him? He had committed offence after offence, no restraint could hold him and he was too young for Borstal. The probation officer came to the rescue with information about a training school somewhere in the country where he would be under discipline and at the same time learn a trade. The school, however, imposed a religious test. The defending counsel thereupon consulted with the young ruffian and afterwards announced to the court that he was all right, he was "Church of England"!

CRITIC

MIDNIGHT

Let a purple pansy lie
In the hollows of your eye;
Let a forest darkness flow
Round the bed from top to toe.
Dark, dark; still, still;
Never stir your heart or will.
Velvet flower, forests deep,
This compassion—is it sleep?

FRANCES CORNFORD

"DISINTERESTEDNESS" OF WAR WORKERS

In the first of two articles on public schools, in THE NEW STATESMAN, Mr. A. L. Rowse writes: "There are great sources of energy and creativeness in the English people—if only these forces are released from the restraints of conventionalism, social conformity, orthodox standards, and the humbug which has ruled for the past two decades."

Doubtless Mr. Rowse is right in thinking that the fundamental problem is one of reforming the education of the young. Nevertheless, from living in a working-class environment (the Fire Service), I am convinced that there is a great deal of energy and intelligence amongst adults which could be released almost at once. This country is as capable of producing intelligent leaders and organisers of the war and the peace as are the Fascist countries. Only, a barrier of class exists which prevents one class from taking anything like its full share of responsibility in citizenship.

This barrier is partly economic and political; it is also largely psychological. The workers not only feel that they have not the opportunity to lead, they also do not want to lead. There is an unwritten moral code which restrains a worker from seeking promotion in the Army, or the Civil Defence. The rank and file resent any seeking after distinction. According to this code, the best man does not seek promotion; only the man (of whom, of course, there are many) who is out for himself. This disinclination to accept responsibility is, of course, a sign of disbelief in the system (the Army, the Civil Defence Unit, the town council, ultimately the State itself) which offers responsible jobs.

Luckily the entry of Russia into the war provides us with a valuable standard by which we can judge the true feelings of the workers towards the State. Ninety per cent. of my colleagues in the Fire Service believe in Russia with a conviction which they certainly do not show for British Democracy. Yet they are not ideological Communists; nor do they want Russian Communism over here. They believe in Russian Communism for the Russians, and in some unknown quantity, corresponding to the Russian ratio, for us over here. It is quite possible to work out the sum, and fill in this unknown quantity of what they want. They believe that the Russian Government represents the interests, not of a privileged class, but of the whole people. They believe that there is equal opportunity for everyone in Russia. They do *not* believe that the Russian worker is better off than the British worker; but they envy him his faith in his government. They are not interested in whether there is free speech in Russia. The point is, they say, that the Russians have the government they want, so they do not need the kind of free speech that would challenge their system. We do need it because we do not have the government that represents the interests of the whole people.

This is what Russia means to the workers of my acquaintance, and it is what they would like democracy to mean. At the same time they have little faith that democracy will ever mean it; and they have curiously little faith that they themselves can effect a change. Things like the Zinoviev Letter and the National Government elections have convinced them that there is little or nothing they can do. Democracy offers the weapon of freedom, and then proves to the people that it is useless. Moreover, since people living in a democracy do not believe in the possibility of violent revolution, democracy has had the curious effect of convincing a large number of its citizens of their political impotence. A democracy that has lost faith in itself is not a country on the verge of revolution; but it may be the victim of some tyranny coming from above or outside. Since we are living in an era of total war, in which it is essential to have the total co-operation of the whole people for our country to survive, it is therefore essential that we should understand how to cure this detachment, even from their own interests, of large masses of the people.

Men in the factories, the Army, the Civil Defence, work, but without a sense that they are sharing the responsibilities of the war. On the contrary, their great consolation is to feel that they are not responsible. At a discussion on the loss of Malaya amongst firemen, the men talked with a certain satisfaction about the hopeless incompetence of the "ruling class" and the "bosses." Someone said: "Well, what are we going to do about it?" Another immediately replied: "We don't want to discuss what we're going to do. We want to discuss who's to blame."

Convinced that they cannot do anything, they take the satisfaction of the impotent in the guilt, and indeed, to-day, the punishment, incurred by the potent ruling class. Yet why are they so sure that they themselves can do nothing? The vote is one answer. The people are not such fools as not to have understood that elections have been conducted for the past twenty years on a principle of blackmail: if they vote against the Government, they have been told, they will lose all their small savings and have no employment. Another reason is their feeling that they are uneducated. The way in which they are gradually awakening from the lethargy and despair of the past twenty years is in a growing demand for education of various kinds. Above all, what is required is education in citizenship, to acquaint them with the kind of problems likely to arise in the next five years.

I cannot write here of the political steps which are essential as a preliminary to a scheme of adult education for the whole people. But it is necessary that the Government should convince them that the war and the peace are really going to be won in the interests of all. Then, the energy of the inhibited class of the potentially intelligent and energetic will be released. Even so, it is important to know what form education in public affairs should take. The B.B.C., Army Education, and some other groups show considerable enterprise. On the other hand, I can only describe the Ministry of Information's system of sending round lecturers to talk down to the people as lamentable. It is no exaggeration at all to say that several of the Ministry's lecturers, who are sent to factories and other places to address workers, might have been chosen expressly for the purpose of exacerbating class feeling and producing apathy. I have heard one of them "prove" to a working class audience that the rich are the real sufferers in this war and not the workers, because he has a lady friend who before the war had an income of £6,000 a year, who is now living on her capital. In order to show their credentials, they never seem to be able to avoid sentences beginning with such phrases as "When I was staying in the Hotel Royal," or "I have a good many friends among the high-ups." They preserve an attitude which seems to say (and sometimes they do say quite openly), "I know history and you don't, so you must believe what I'm saying." They have no idea of carrying on a discussion, and very little of answering questions.

Of course, some of the Ministry speakers are better than others, but even these are hampered by the fact that the system on which they are working—that one class of people who know everything can come down and lecture another who know nothing—is wrong. The B.B.C., in the Brains Trust, in discussions, in debates between different classes of people, recognises the fact, unknown to the Ministry of Information, that there is more than one point of view. The principle of educational propaganda should really be this: the leader of a discussion is talking on terms of equality with people, who are taking advantage of his specialised knowledge, which he puts at their disposal. There is no reason why the leader should not preserve a humble attitude towards workers. After all, we are all working towards the same ends, and the workers are doing so more directly, and perhaps more effectively than the leader is. Adult education should be conducted on a reasonable basis of pooling knowledge and experience: not on a class basis of the educated talking down to the ignorant.

In the Fire Service a scheme of discussion groups has been started, which is, at the least, an interesting experiment. From each group of five or six stations, a leader has been chosen, who is given a course in conducting discussions, and obtaining and imparting information. He then leads discussions three evenings a week, which means that each station has one discussion a fortnight. The scheme is entirely voluntary, but apart from inevitable difficulties in making time for the discussions, it is, where the leaders are good, a great success. I have little doubt that if a similar scheme could be extended to the whole of Civil Defence, the following results would soon be observed: there would be a great increase in the demand amongst civilian defence workers to do war work in their spare time and when there are no blitzes: civilian defence workers would play an important and conscious part in maintaining the morale of the towns; they would also be the best allies of the planners of post-war reconstruction in the towns. Civilian defence workers live in towns and go home every twenty-four or forty-eight hours. They could become an extremely effective body of opinion, if they were given the opportunity to express themselves.

There is a chance now in England of starting a mass education movement, such as that which swept Republican Spain during the Civil War. The essentials are that the people should believe in what they are fighting for, and that they can play an effective role in the post-war world; and that the education should spring from below, out of the desire of people to find out for themselves, rather than be imposed from above.

STEPHEN SPENDER

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to K. S. Lomax.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

In Flanders he carried cricket balls on night patrols, hoping to be able to hurl them against the enemy.—*Star.*

Loyal millions far beyond the reckoning are fervently hoping that His Majesty the King will win the Oaks and the Derby with Sun Chariot and Big Game. The names of these horses are already known throughout the universe, but not as yet have they earned the right to fame eternal.—*Sunday Despatch.*

After his adoption, Capt. Mott Radcliffe said that although he went to school at Eton with Douglas Home, it would be a fight with the gloves off, as, in his opinion, independent candidates to-day were little better than Fifth Columnists.—*Reynolds News.*

The work of the evening was Brahms' Second Symphony. Here was a great opportunity for conductor and orchestra, and it was grasped.

Mr. Barbirolli at times seemed to give the symphony its head, but, when it was his time, he brought the orchestra to heel, and we had a performance that brought a Scots audience to its feet. Could Brahms ask more?—*Aberdeen Press and Journal.*

Mr. F. Watt (Cons.), in a maiden speech, suggested that something should be done to help the small number of firms making bagpipes. The sound of the bagpipes was dear to every Scot, but some Englishmen, particularly those in the War Office and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, lacked a sense of beauty.—*Daily Telegraph.*

FIRST OPS.

As soon as the engines started, Ford felt all right. You could tell instantly—at least Ford thought he could—that they were running perfectly: a deep even hum; and a feathery, wingy beat of airscrews. These Manchesters are very big aircraft for two engines and they have incredibly long airscrews: you see them turning solemnly on either side of you, not very fast, like windmills.

The running engines were a sign that they had started; that the slight unpleasantness of waiting about was over. Actually the time between briefing—3 o'clock, and take-off, 6.30—had gone quickly. But missing his tea had definitely upset Ford. There had been (you don't say so?) a muddle. Operational teas had been ordered for the crews as usual. But they had forgotten that two passengers, Sailor (the Naval Liaison Officer at Group) and Ford were coming too. So there was none for them. And operational teas are not to be despised. Lovely bacon and eggs. At any time Ford would have hated to see it streaming by—and none for him. But before going out on one's first operation it seemed really hard: and a bad omen too. As if one wasn't quite there, already, somehow.

Then, emptying one's pockets: Sailor and he gave their identification cards, money, letters, etc. to the Doc. to keep—routine to everybody else: borrowing a parachute, a helmet fitted up for intercomm. "So you can hear what we are talking about," Dim Woolley, the pilot, said. Ford had known Dim for some time. A pale young man with a superb moustache. He had met the navigator at briefing; had been shown the course. It was simply a long straight line: very long, Ford thought. The other five chaps in the lorry going across to the dispersed aircraft were new to him. Sergeants and flight sergeants, gunners, wireless ops, second pilot-bomb aimer.

They had all bundled into the aircraft now: she sat on the perimeter track, throbbing gently. Dim ("Why Dim?—I think—I hope, that he isn't," Ford had said to the Sailor at tea. "Oh that's only because he put up so many blacks in the Mess, when he first came. He's a bloody good pilot actually, though he does shoot a line. I chose him for you.") Dim opened up each engine in turn. The heavy frame of the Manchester shook. The engines—Rolls-Royce Vultures—roared, but roared silkily if you can imagine such a thing, and the aircraft began to roll very slowly forward.

Ford looked out of the astrodome. The five Manchesters which were to take part in the operation from this Station were each crawling towards the West end of the East-West runway. The aircraft were ponderous, clumsy, beetle-like on the ground. Now the first was headed down the runway; it began to charge; the impression of combined weight and speed grew and grew. Ford watched, with personal interest, to see if the take-off was all right. There had been a lot of chat at tea: "Well, I'm last off, so if you're all in the hedge I shan't go." "Well, Christ, have a heart, I've got Sailor to get airborne too"—and Dim, "What about me, this chap weighs twice as much as Sailor—as much as another 1,000 pounder." Ford saw that the pilots were not in the least bit worried. But the aircraft *were* heavily loaded, though not with bombs: they carried mines. The operation consisted of laying these mines in certain much frequented "enemy waters."

As the first Manchester passed the intersection of the runways, Ford saw the faint beginnings of the divergence between the line of her movement and the plane of the runway. Then she was airborne, and her dark bulk heaved over the boundary, with effort but with plenty to spare.

The second starter, with Sailor on board, went off while they were turning from the track on to the runway. Then they—P for Peter—turned to face east into the wind. Dim opened up his engines. P for Peter gathered way. Ford had not a moment's anxiety.

It was a messy February evening, with lowish cloud. Even at 300 or 400 feet the snow-bordered fields began to blur—as if seen through a dirty windscreen. Ford didn't realise that they had made a full circle when he heard Dim's voice saying "setting course now," and an answering "O.K." which he supposed came from the navigator. He kept his head in the astrodome, reflecting that as two-thirds of the journey would be made in the dark he would have plenty of time to look about the aircraft later on. But the flight to the coast was very dull.

As soon as the dirty edge of the sea was beneath them, he felt the nose rise, the motors open out. Dim was evidently going up through cloud. A moment later they were engulfed. The Manchester bumped very little inside the cloud: there was nothing to be seen; just even greyness. Five or ten minutes passed. Ford was just going to sit down when a fleck of light passed overhead: then another, brighter, Ford's eyes followed it backwards, turning towards the tail: then more light; then definitely a patch of sky—all at once they were out.

Is there anything better than breaking cloud? Every time he had done it, Ford had found it one of the best things in the world. No doubt, he thought, in the future when everyone flies, and the images of flying have passed into the language, it will become one of the symbols for the reappearance of hope: one will read such things as "After a series of unrelieved failures, the young dramatist broke cloud with his sparkling comedy "Two in a Turret": or in a programme note "After this sombre passage, dominated by the brass and wood winds, the symphony breaks cloud with the gay air of—" But that, like all programme notes, would be a bore.

Ford's eyes were resting in pleasure upon the scene before him. Above cloud it was an exquisite evening. As he looked back, due West between the tail fins, the sky was red with the winter sunset: and in it there hung, delicately, a new moon. They flew evenly, a hundred feet or so above the light surface of the cloud. There was no break in it, nothing to suggest that below them there was quite a different evening, grey, brown, murky, which they had just left.

Ford stood gazing. Then he noticed that a part of the aircraft was moving. The dorsal turret, its unexpected, conical shape, sticking up like a monk's hood from the fuselage, was turning slowly and solemnly, first to the right, then to the left. As it did so the barrels of its machine guns waved up and down. The dorsal gunner had begun his unremitting watch against fighters. No doubt the rear-gunner in his turret was doing the same.

A voice spoke in his ear.

"Captain, this is the front gunner speaking. Can I try my guns?"

Dim's voice. "Yes, just a short squirt."

Ford could see the barrels of the guns in the nose turn downwards. Then he heard, faintly, the rrrrrrr—then a voice in his ear saying, "O.K." then another rrrrrrr—another voice. "Rear-gunner speaking, O.K." "Dorsal gunner speaking, O.K." Ford felt safe and comfortable, protected by those eight power-turreted guns. He looked ahead. The first stars were out. Night was falling in the East.

They flew on, peacefully. A precise professional voice: "Captain, navigator speaking: alter course to 170." Dim's voice: "O.K. 170." Ford took his head out of the astrodome and sat down. Inside the bomber it was already dark. The wireless op. and the navigator had switched on little glowing desk lights by which they worked.

"Wireless op.," Navigator speaking. "You might give me a couple of fixes. When you have time: don't break off your watch" (i.e. listening to our home stations in case they transmit any new orders to aircraft on operations.)

The wireless op.'s voice, "O.K."

The figure beside Ford began a complex bout of knob twiddling. A few minutes later his voice repeated a group of numbers and letters, the navigator's voice "O.K."

Ford moved forward a yard, kneeling on his parachute pack, beside the navigator's table. The navigator was hard at work with pencils and dividers. When he noticed Ford, he pointed to a spot about a third of the way down the course line. Ford nodded. Then he heard his voice.

"Captain, navigator; a couple of wizard fixes from the W/Op. we're dead on course."

Dim's voice: "Good show."

The exertion of moving forward made Ford realise that, to his great surprise, he was sweating. He'd kept his greatcoat on, had a couple of pullovers under it, and wore big, lined gloves. Now he looked round and noticed that neither of his neighbours had taken any of these precautions. He felt definitely overdressed for the party. But beyond taking off his gloves, he couldn't do anything about it. And the heat was pretty stifling. He noticed that Dim had come in his overcoat, too. Later he asked him why.

"You don't catch me walking about Oflag VII in my pants at this time of the year," he said: then added, "But I suppose in practice it would only mean this old coat leading a charge on the Russian front."

In a little while Ford began to get a real headache from the heat. He heard Dim's voice, "Can't someone turn that damned heater off—I'm stifling."

There were murmurs of approval and the wireless op. leant across Ford and pushed a knob over. It didn't seem to make much difference. Another voice said, "Sir, could you open your side window a bit?" Dim did so and a rush of delicious fresh air came through the bomber. But it made too much of a draught to keep open all the time. So Dim shut it again and at intervals someone asked to have it open for a bit. It was exactly like any set of English people trying to regulate the heating in a continental train.

Ford stood up again. It was now fully night. The cloud floor just beneath them was a grey expanse. The stars winter-bright. Ford found the Bear, the pointers, and the North Star, where they ought to be to port; Orion was on the starboard quarter. He sat down again.

He thought he would go visiting. He felt shy of switching on the little microphone in the oxygen mask hanging from his helmet. But he did so; he said into it: "Captain, Ford here. Can I go and visit the rear-gunners?" Dim's voice said "Yes do." Ford switched off the microphone, unplugged himself, hitched up the cord in his parachute harness, and began clambering back down the body of the bomber. He opened the armour-plated door just behind his seat, and shut it again behind him. Now it was pitch dark. He felt his way towards the tail; it certainly wasn't too hot here. Finally he saw a glimmer of light straight ahead of him. When he got to it he was rather surprised to find that there was empty space, where the tail ended in the rear-gunner's turret. The rear-gunner was, as he expected, slowly swinging his turret from side to side. And as it swung it left an open space through which you looked out into the night. Ford clambered back to the light and warmth of the body of the bomber.

When he had got back and plugged himself in again, he noticed the wireless op.'s clock. They had been flying an hour and a half. They would be there in forty minutes.

He sat still, watching the dark outlines of the crew, in the glow of the working lights. It was a satisfying scene. A voice in his ear.

"Captain: rear-gunner speaking. There's a light on our starboard quarter."

Ford promptly put his head back into the astrodome. There it was, a moving glow, he thought; from the under cloud layer: a mile or so away from them.

Dim's voice said:

"Searchlight I should think. Navigator, is it from one of the islands?"

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There was a pause, then the navigator's voice: "Might be so and so." (He mentioned the name of an island). But it's a bit too far out for that."

Dim's voice: "Might be from a flak ship."

They flew on. Then another voice:

"Flak on the starboard quarter."

Simultaneously Ford saw it. A medium heavy barrage, looking just the same as a barrage looks like from the ground, a longish—a nice longish—way off. They all looked at it for a moment. Then the navigator's voice:

"That's from So and So island. I know the barrage."

The navigator had spent a lot of time in these parts. He told Ford later that this island barrage always came up in that distinct shape. Anyhow it was the only island that could put up so considerable a volume of fire.

They flew on. The island's display passed from the quarter to the beam, and then began to be left behind. Now they saw flares, being dropped both to the port and starboard. They seemed to be just the ordinary coloured flares, dropped in pairs. Every Londoner saw dozens of them dropped last winter. What they were meant to do, and whether they came from hostile fighters, or were being shot up from the coast and from flak ships, Ford didn't know.

Dim said (presumably to the front gunner and bomb aimer): "Let me know if you see any flak exactly ahead of us."

A voice said: "I will."

They flew on. The note of the motors changed. Dim was throttling back; the nose went down a shade. Almost immediately the stars went out; they were engulfed in the greyness. Ford knew that they were going down through the cloud, to try to check their exact position from a sight of the coast, when they came to their E.T.A. (Estimate time of their arrival). When they had checked it, they would drop their load.

Ford knew enough about flying to know that coming down through cloud was sometimes a slightly tricky proceeding. Met had said that the cloud base would be 1,500 feet out here at this time. If that was so, there would be lots to spare, of course. But Met cannot always be right. And if cloud base were only a few hundred feet—or only a few feet—up, then it wouldn't be so easy to stop yourself flying into the sea, if you persisted in trying to do your job by checking your position.

Ford could feel that Dim was going down in a very gentle glide. He looked out. He could just see the wing tips and tail. A bomber in cloud is like a blunt fish, swimming through an opaque sea. It is unseen, unseeing. Ford felt alone. He was beginning to wonder why he heard nothing on the intercomm. He would have expected to hear the navigator telling them that there were so many minutes to go before the E.T.A.

Suddenly the greyness turned to black; they had broken cloud; Ford craned downwards; he could see nothing; an instant later the engines screamed, roared: Ford felt the nose heave up: in a moment they were in cloud again. From his astrodome Ford could not see down. But he guessed that the sea had been there, and not far away.

Surely they were saying something on the intercomm.? He felt if his plug was in. Blast, it had slipped half out. He had missed some of the most interesting part. He shoved it home. Immediately Dim's voice:

"Bomb doors open."

The bomb aimer's voice: "Bomb doors open."

Dim's voice: "In thirty seconds release the load. I'll jettison if it doesn't go." A pause. Then from underneath a clonk.

Dim's voice, "Shut the bomb doors."

Navigator's voice: "Set course for base."

Dim's voice: "We'll go up out of it: fly at 6,000 feet."

Ford felt the aircraft bank gently, the nose rise and swing to starboard, in a climbing turn. Almost immediately they were out of cloud again. Now he saw flak on both sides, fairly close to starboard, and a long way off to port.

Navigator's voice: "That's So and So near to starboard, such and such some way off to port."

Dim's voice: "We can't have been far wrong then. Not bad for this filthy night. Couldn't get a proper pin point."

Pause. Dim's voice again: "On course for base."

Ford was surprised to think that they had made a full 90 degrees turn. He looked up at the stars. Yes, no mistake about it: they weren't on their reciprocal or anything. The North Star was now to starboard, and Orion to port. He was pleased that he could check something for himself.

A searchlight shot up, much nearer than anything had been so far: Ford saw with sudden interest that it was to starboard of them. The blotch of light which it made on the underside of the cloud, lay, not very far off, but definitely to starboard of a point which they would soon pass over on this course. He began to grasp the meaning of the fact that these near lights—the lights the navigator had said were from the nearby coast—were still to starboard of them after they had turned a full 90 degrees. He had just realised what this meant when he heard Dim's voice confirming him. "Gone over the bloody coast—turned too wide—I'll turn North a bit."

Ford noticed how Dim waited till the blotch of light on the cloud layer had moved well down their starboard quarter, then turned the nose a few points to starboard.

Then they settled back on to their homeward course. The island was still throwing up its barrage, in an irritable sort of way: the navigator picked out one or two familiar points by gun flashes or searchlights.

After a bit Ford went forward and stood behind Dim and the second pilot in the nose, watching the pretty green illuminated instruments. Then Dim turned her over to the second pilot. He plugged Ford into the socket behind his chair. The first thing Ford heard was the navigator cursing the second pilot.

"Keep that air speed steady, for God's sake. You're all over the bloody sky."

A new voice said, humbly, "Sorry."

Dim said, evidently to Ford: "Well, I'm afraid it's been a very boring trip for you."

"Far from it," said Ford. "You don't suppose I wanted it to be exciting, do you?"

Dim laughed.

Ford said: "The only irritating thing is I missed a bit of conversation just before you dropped the load; my plug had slipped half out. I heard you say 'open bomb doors.' Had you been talking just before then?"

Dim said, "Yes, we'd discussed just where to drop the load. They've sent us out on such a filthy night, we couldn't get a real pinpoint. That cloud was down to 200 feet; thought we'd never come through it. My altimeter was knocking its bottom out. Did you see the sea?"

Ford said, "No, you can't look down from that astrodome thing."

Dim said, "Lucky for you: it looked bloody rough and cold to me. Filthy great brown waves."

Ford said, "How near were we?"

"About 200 feet."

"That was when you stepped on the gas."

"I certainly did."

Ford put his head into one of the pear-shaped perspex blisters behind the pilot's seat: they

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allowed you to look directly downwards. The cloud layer was far below them now: once Ford saw a gap, and through it a black surface which he took to be the sea.

The flight back went quickly and pleasantly. The very idea of anything going wrong with them had disappeared. The navigator seemed only to have just said "We've left the enemy coast," when he said, "We shall be crossing the English coast in eight minutes."

Dim's voice: "Now we'll see if you really know where we are."

Navigator's voice, "We're there all right: you'll see." Then, "crossing the coast now."

Ford heard Dim take her over again. Ford hoped the cloud base wasn't as low here as it had been over enemy water. It wasn't. Trailing a few grey whisps, they came into a darker starless night; but the ground was visible, still quite a reasonable distance below them.

A moment later a red beacon winked to starboard.

Dim's voice: "What's it flashing? Can't see it for the wing."

Pause. Then "DL. It's Wentworth."

Dim's voice. "Wizard. I hand it to you navigator."

Wentworth was a fighter station, 15 miles East of their base. Another beacon. The navigator's voice, pardonably, drily, self-satisfied. "Flashing QS. That is base."

It had seemed every bit as sure and easy as coming back to a fully lighted airport in an airliner in peacetime, with every navigational aid. This was super-navigation. Ford had been to enough interrogations to know that it didn't by any means always turn out as well as that. It was very strong corroborative evidence that they really had been where they thought they were when they had dropped their stuff.

In a minute or so, they saw the string of lights round the perimeter track—trivially pretty, like fairy lanterns at a fete. They swung to starboard a little.

Dim's voice: "Hullo Jackal, hullo Jackal (Jackal was their base's call sign that night), this is Starfish, P for Peter." (Aircraft P of so and so squadron) "Calling. Can you hear me? Am circling aerodrome at 1,000 feet. Can I have permission to land? Over to you, over." Pause. Then, through the helmet, a louder crackle; then a new voice sounding just as if it had come from one of the crew in the aircraft.

"Hullo P for Peter, hullo P for Peter, this is Jackal answering. Can you hear me? Continue circling aerodrome. Over to you, over."

Dim's voice: "Message received and understood, over."

They ran on, in their gently banking turn, the lighted perimeter track slipping round below them; now Ford saw the flare path, like a neat, straight, lighted street. It didn't look a very big objective to put 20 tons or so of bomber down on.

A voice: "W for William, W for William, this is Jackal speaking. Proceed to end of flare path then turn starboard clear of runway, on to perimeter track." Ford realised that they were hearing base speak to another aircraft which had already landed and was blocking the flare path. They heard no answer from William. Then Jackal repeated its instructions to William. Still no answer. They flew on.

Then Dim's voice, explosive:

"W for William, get off the ruddy flare path, can't you." (That, Ford knew, was technically known as "irregular R.T. procedure.")

It had no effect. They flogged on.

Dim's voice: "Hullo Jackal, Starfish, P for Peter calling. Can I land? Visibility poor. Over to you."

Pause. "Hullo P for Peter. Jackal answering. Continue circling aerodrome. Is that understood? Over to you, over."

Dim's voice, "Message received and understood." Dim said "Blast."

They flogged on. Ford had lost count of the circuits. But he knew that, as a matter of fact, they hadn't been held up very long; not nearly as long as he'd often seen aircraft made to circle when something had gone wrong on the ground. He was just resigning himself to anything up to an hour of this flogging round when the voice came again:

"Hullo P for Peter, Jackal calling. Land. Over to you. Over."

Dim's voice: "Message received and understood. Am coming in. Over."

The motors were throttled back. Ford felt the aircraft losing height; they were at right angles to the flare path. As usual, when he noticed how a landing was being made, he did not see how the pilot would get her round square to the flare path. But by degrees, wobbling a trifle as she lost air speed, the blunt nose came round. Now they were nearing the aerodrome boundary: they were practically straight with the runway: the ground was coming up fast: Ford felt so confident in the smoothness of Dim's night landings that he stayed standing up with his head in the astrodome. And sure enough the wheels took the runway with a gentle bump—bounced a few feet up—came down again with no more bump than the first time; then her twenty tons were losing momentum along the runway. A murmur of "Nice work, Sir," "Very nice, Sir," from the crew. He unplugged his helmet.

They bundled out. The flight sergeant of the ground crew shone his torch on the steps. Ford heard Dim say, "She went beautifully—simply perfect, Flight." The truck took them back to the flights: on to Station headquarters, and interrogation over a cup of tea. There they found the Sailor. He had had by no means so pleasant a ride, severe icing most of the way; then he had recrossed the English coast miles off course, had a long hunt for base. However, here he was all right, sceptical as ever. They tried to convince him that it was the approaches of a German estuary, not, as he seemed to be suggesting, the Humber, which they had mined. He reluctantly agreed that, maybe, this time, they had. All the aircraft from this station were back: everybody felt cheerful; they drove up to the Mess and this time there was bacon and eggs for the Sailor and Ford.

Next morning Ford went into the Ops Room at Group. Sailor was there. "Everyone got back all right last night, I suppose?" Ford said.

Sailor said: "No they didn't. Look."

He pointed to the board. There were two gaps in the list of times of return to base. One from each of the other two stations which had operated. Ford said, "Two missing."

The Sailor nodded.

"Makes you think, doesn't it Sailor?" Ford said, grinning, but wryly.

Sailor nodded again.

It had seemed so completely unalarming: so entirely under control. Ford was frankly shaken.

"Who were they?" he said.

"Munroe of so and so squadron, for one."

Ford remembered Munroe: he had had some dealings with him the week before. He had thought him an unpleasant young man, as a matter of fact. (It is in fiction that "only the best" are killed). Munroe's longish, oiled red hair—it would be wet now—came into Ford's mind.

"And the other?"

"A Manchester crew."

That meant seven of them.

"What on earth happened to them? They wouldn't have been hit by that flak surely—or by fighters on a night like that?"

The Sailor shrugged his shoulders. "Maybe they stayed too long in one place and got hit: more likely they got iced up and flew into the

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sea, I expect. So would you if Dim hadn't been pretty bright really. It takes experience to keep a loaded Manchester out of the sea when you break cloud at 200 feet. If the pilot doesn't like the look of it, gets fussed, pushes the nose up too hard before he has opened out—you stall, and then down she goes on her tail. Maybe that's what happened. The Manchester captain wasn't terribly experienced."

Ford said "I see."

So maybe he should have felt frightened, in that soft greyness when he hadn't seen the sea. Actually he had only felt frightened when they hadn't brought him his tea in the Mess. One never seemed to feel the right things at the right time.

The subjective reflection of reality is unreliable, uncertain. We don't understand much of what's happening to us, even when it's happening. We simply don't get it. The man in the modern world: the blind bomber in cloud: the blunt-nosed fish, moving through opaque waters. None of us get it. No one knows what it's all about. FLIGHT LIEUTENANT

SICKERT'S LAST PICTURES

"Gather up the fragments that remain": it is a melancholy duty. Here at the Leicester Galleries are sixteen paintings of which the earliest was begun in 1938 and the latest a few weeks before Sickert died. Even in these three years Time's work is visible: *Albion Cottages*, *Broadstairs*, begun and finished in 1938, has more in it, is a vision more thoroughly explored, than anything else in the room; whereas *Walcot Parade*, *Bath* and *London Road*, both painted in 1941, though charming, are superficial. They are superficial in that the artist could do no more than state beautifully his sense of a scene; they are not "tired" only because the painter had the tact to stop working before he himself became so. On the other hand, *Bamboo in the Shadows*, painted, or at any rate begun, in 1939, is a tired picture. That a man of eighty should have retained the nicety of hand here displayed is remarkable; but the heart is not in it. Why did Sickert sit down before this, to him, ungrateful subject? Because he was too infirm to go farther afield. Signs of weariness are still more noticeable in what presumably will be the popular piece of the show: Marie Ney and Edith Evans in *As You Like It*. To be sure, the fine, free brushing in of the dresses reminds us of the master at his best; but the drawing of arms and hands does not; while the bit of conventional padding—a back-cloth perhaps—which does duty as background is simply not Sickert. Assuredly, in happier days, he would have sought and found something to put behind these figures, something to provoke all the liveliness and loveliness of his palette.

To dissipate the gloomy mood induced inevitably by these legible signs of a great talent's decay, one has only to return to the Reynolds Room. Here we have drawings of all periods: here we have the Sickert whom we knew and admired—the greatest British artist of the age. Almost all are painters' drawings; they are means to an end, and that end is an oil-painting. There are a few studies for etchings and engravings and two drawings, made as drawings, for that Londra Benedetta series, which he never finished, which indeed he hardly began. That is a loss I never much regretted: only those who treat pictures as though they were books and drawings as though they were journalism will pause for long before "*Dr. Hasleden, I presume*" (No. 3 in the Londra Benedetta series) when such things as *A Gondolier, back view*, *Reclining Nude*, *Enid*, or Nos. 64 and 68 are hanging near by. If ever one really does become intimate with an artist through his work, it is through his drawings: let Poussin's bear witness. And before some of these notes, direct and almost businesslike, yet exquisitely decorative, one can fancy oneself back with Sickert in the bar at the Bedford. The innumerable studies struck off in Music Halls are as good as, though not better than, anything he did—of course I am thinking only of drawings. Artists have liked them always and always will, while for the great public they have at the moment a sentimental and historical appeal. May I therefore suggest that a collection of these, to be not only housed but hung in the Tate, would be a suitable Sickert memorial? (For a Sickert memorial I take it we are to have whether we want it or not.) Only, if it is to consist of drawings, it is to be hoped the selection will be made by someone who knows the difference between Art and Anecdote. CLIVE BELL

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Sky High," at the Phoenix

"I should have called this revue *Cottage Pie*: we have enjoyed so much of it before."

"Or *Sorrow's Crown of Sorrow*—you know, remembering happier things!"

"Your Hermione rehashing Madame Butterfly. . . ."

"Is at least funnier than *your* Hermione giving yet another lecture in the accents of Ilford."

"But Naunton Wayne brings a new flavour."

"And Elizabeth Welch walks away with the show."

"Crisham gets beautifully the break in the choir-boy's voice."

"It's the only break he does get. If *my* Hermione took his place as a toreador the scene might pass."

"The *Irish scena* reaches rock bottom."

"You forget *Savoy Grilling* and the patter of *For Ladies Only*."

"Why can't the authors find some new subjects?"

"Perhaps they read no paper but *The Era*."

"They read THE NEW STATESMAN, poor mutts."

"The best thing in the show . . .

"Is *Park Meeting*."

"Yes. . . . I did not know your Miss Gingold had it in her."

"And your Miss Baddeley plays a tart with such understanding."

Exeunt, both shouting angrily, "*My* Hermione . . ."

Paul Nash and Leslie Hurry, at the Redfern Gallery

Mr. Paul Nash in his watercolours uses so limited and cold a range of colours and tones that the effect of a whole roomful is to cast a certain chill. But there is the advantage in exhibiting works of different dates that one can follow the evolution of his remarkable talent. The earlier work is rigid and schematic, but as his interest turns increasingly to irregular and even disquieting forms, the watercolours gain in freedom and vitality. His eye is caught by a tree that looks like a bull's head, or the fossil of a prehistoric creature in the shale. In *Denizens of the Forest of Dean* and *Haunted Landscape*, Mr. Nash most successfully conveys a sense of mystery. But we like best of all *The Elm*, which has a caressing texture and a geniality of colour such as he rarely allows himself. This exhibition gives one an even stronger sense of Mr. Nash's personal accomplishment. The adjoining room is given up to Mr. Hurry's designs for Mr. Helpmann's ballet, *Hamlet*. His line-drawing is rather spidery, and the designs are not so much intrinsically excellent as interesting to admirers of the ballet.

THE MOVIES

"Flying Fortress," at Warner's and the Empire
"The Jungle Book" and "The Siege of Tobruk," at the Gaumont
"Nazi Agent," at the Empire

American films about the war are still sensational, still belong to the era of armed neutrality; the time-lag tells heavily against them. How many more times shall we see the heroic playboy packing up for England to find the war in the air? Every Hollywood flying film, like a Hitler speech, has to recapitulate, to make the old sentimental appeals, to bash us on the head by being more colossal than the one before. *Flying Fortress* belongs to the adventure period

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of war films; as such, it is pretty effective, with not too outrageous a story. It takes rather long reaching this side of the Atlantic, the Blitz holds us up for a while, but then the film opens up into an elaborate and well dramatised bombing raid on Berlin. This takes place in broad daylight and is completely successful. An English lord and an American millionaire are on board. However, the Flying Fortress makes a splendid foreground, and the cloudscapes, Heinkels hurtling head-on and oxygen giving out, do the trick.

In totalitarian warfare anything, I suppose, is possible, and *Nazi Agent* shows us how far things may go wrong for the Axis when the Nazi Consul in New York is displaced by his identical twin. The twin, luckily enough, is a peace-loving democrat who murders the Consul in self-defence and then steps into his shoes to break up the spy-rings. Conrad Veidt plays the good twin (mild and bearded) and the bad one (clean-shaven, with monocle), and then the first brilliantly impersonating the second. There is quite a lot of Conrad Veidt, from all angles, in *Nazi Agent*. His performance fascinates, with the old charm, and that rather than thrills of action or the gain to democracy is what one carries away from an evening at the Empire.

The Jungle Book is not Kipling as I remember him, but then my memory is bad. A jungle in honey-colour, Sabu and his little mate, the whistling wolves and snakes that breathe warnings in a husky whisper, the Aladdin's cave of riches, ought to be wonderful. Some of the animals—the tiger, the panther and the elephants—do survive being filmed by Korda, and at the end the whole jungle, very appropriately, goes up in flames.

In the same programme at the Gaumont there is an English documentary that deserves to be widely seen—*The Siege of Tobruk*. This film gives a dignified and exciting record of an heroic achievement, and some of the facts strike as fresh as a current news-reel. How many of us know, for example, that at one point in the 246 days' siege the Navy succeeded in relieving the original defenders and substituting a new garrison of 27,000 men? *The Siege of Tobruk* was photographed on the spot and produced by the Army Film Unit.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

ANTI-SEMITISM AND BLACK MARKET

SIR,—To-day European soil is fertile in anti-Semitism and Britain is no exception. For those who realise how this curse weakens and splits a nation under arms, it is important at the present moment to understand why Jewish names frequently appear among published accounts of black market cases. Failing this, one may easily condemn the whole people as a bad lot to whom Hitler has meted out proper justice.

Commercial activity is almost traditional among Jewry, dating from feudal times when, as late-comers, they entered a Europe with room only for two classes, lord and serf. They became the vanguard of the merchant class. During periods of social stress the money-lending section became the natural object of hatred by the peasants, and easy victims of exaction by the overlord. Their long history of persecution and economic exclusion had the obvious effect of throwing them together, and concentrating them largely within the commercial class. With more recent economic freedom they have diffused into industry, agriculture and the professions.

To-day, therefore, with its overhang from the past a larger proportion of Jews than might be expected, from their numbers alone, belong to the commercial world, and of these by far the greatest proportion belong to the category of small business men engaged in wholesale and retail trading.

In all parts of Europe to-day this economic class is being liquidated. In this country this is being effected by enforced unification of businesses, by the purchase of groups of these by financial and insurance companies, by restrictions on the supply of goods, by rationing, etc. It follows that with it disappears also the economic basis of a considerable section of Jewry. This is no more a deliberate anti-Semitic action on the part of the powers that be than is the fact that many of the worst ravages of the war in Eastern Europe have occurred in the areas occupied by the Jews. It is simply the speeding-up of an old process.

In the struggle to survive it is to be expected that certain members of this class will seek, by devious means, to obtain goods that have scarcity value especially if there is, as there undoubtedly is, a market for their sale even among the very people who condemn the practice. The occurrence of Jewish names in these court cases, therefore, must not be taken to mean that here is a people devoid of social sense, but rather as evidence of the economic liquidation of a section of the commercial class. If economic pressure were applied to a different group—ice-cream vendors, for example, or companies owning blocks of flats—the black market names would likewise undergo a change. Corresponding pressure creates a demand for black market goods among otherwise decent people.

There is certainly an impression widely held among thoughtful people that newspapers tend to give undue prominence to Jewish cases, perhaps for its "stunt" value, while the much larger ramps that are still regarded as legal are not referred to at all.

Imperial College, London. H. LEVY

SIR,—Mr. Israel Cohen claims that anti-Semitism should be the subject of State action; it should surely first be made the subject of dispassionate research. There must be reasons for its repeated appearance through the centuries, other than the mere smallness of Jewish communities. There are probably anti-Semitic seeds scattered thinly but far and wide in most countries, and Mass Observation could (I do not believe it has) conduct a most fruitful investigation into what the general public think and believe about Jews and why.

The strongest solvent of irrational hatreds is personal acquaintance. For this reason anything that tends to set the Jew apart from his fellow man should receive special attention. People would not have believed the extraordinary things about Jewish ritual, which in the past they have believed, if synagogues had been open to the public like other churches, and if there had been an evangelical aspect to the Jewish religion. For the same reason it is to be deplored that ancient proscriptions of certain articles of diet, which now lack all rational basis, are still maintained. In combating anti-Semitism, there is room for self-examination by Jews as well as Christians.

London County Council, E. T. O. SLATER
Sutton Training Centre, Surrey.

POLITENESS WEEK

SIR,—A lot of fun has been poked at Goebbels for his "politeness" campaign in Germany. It seems to me that we could do very well with a similar campaign in England. I have been home about nine months now after working abroad for the last 14 years. My present job takes me all over the country, and I am struck by the apparent deterioration of English manners.

Wherever I go, in trains and railway stations, in offices and restaurants and shops, perhaps most of all in Government Departments with swollen wartime staffs, I find people who seem to think that rudeness spells efficiency. Whenever I innocently propose to do something that some wartime regulation prevents, or to buy something that turns out not to be in stock, I am put right by some petty official, clerk or salesman with what seems to be a positive delight in giving evil tidings.

The telephone service is no exception. We have all laughed at times over the operator's "Sorry you've been t-r-r-r-oubled" of other days. I don't like servility myself, but I must confess I prefer that formality to the "Hurry up, can't you?" or the curt "No answer," or the simple cutting off without an explanation that I so often get now.

British manners vary considerably from place to place. In a general way I find people have better

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JONATHAN CAPE

manners in the North than in the South, better in the country or village—for real good manners give me a mining village untroubled by a squirearchy!—than in the towns, better at the top *and* bottom of the social scale than in the middle.

Still, the rudest town I have struck so far is Newcastle, where I recently spent a week-end on business. After 48 hours there I felt bruised all over by mere rudeness. I hardly remember a single railway or hotel employee or petty official in Newcastle who didn't treat a civil question or request of mine as an excuse for some degree of deliberate discourtesy.

The climax came when I was actually leaving Newcastle and an L.N.E.R. inspector clipped my ticket at the station barrier. "Turn right," he said, meaning I should cross the footbridge to another platform.

"Which platform, please?" I asked him. "Turn right!" he repeated fiercely. "Yes," I said, "I know that, but which platform, please? That bridge leads to all the platforms." For some reason this infuriated the inspector, though I was early for my train and he had no crowd to cope with. "If I tell you," he shouted, "you'll only ask me where it is!"

Young women, I find, especially those doing "war-work" and thereby enjoying a slight degree of authority over a patient public, are the worst offenders. The *hauteur* with which they treat a mere man is amazing. It is also depressing to one who, like me, believes in the equality of the sexes and finds the presumption of sex-privilege by women irritating in a civilised community.

There might be two good excuses for our wartime manners. The first is nervousness due to war strain; the second is that they may (I hope) be due to awakening social consciousness and the determination of the underdogs to be underdogs no more. Unfortunately, I know these excuses will not wash. The Germans are under real strain now; they're being heavily bombed while the shadow of defeat draws near them. We English have not been bombed much for a year, and we say we are sure of victory.

As for our changing social values, the underdogs may be stirring, but they're with us still; and, oddly enough, the real underdogs seem to be almost the only polite people left in England. But our aggressive underlings-in-office are even ruder to their supposed "inferiors" than to the rest of us. For instance, I constantly see weary and bewildered soldiers who have spent all night standing in the corridors of trains being treated like dirt by waitresses in station buffets, whose usual technique is to be deliberately deaf to a request for a bun or a "cup o' tea" three times and then bite off the victim's head for making it once more.

Almost invariably, if you answer back, the excuse given for every form of unhelpfulness, muddle or sheer laziness is the blessed statement: "There's a war on." I noticed that some time ago, and I thought it a good reason for being more, not less, considerate to my fellow-humans. In wartime it is exceptionally necessary to avoid fraying people's nerves by deliberate harshness or indifference.

No, I don't think we should laugh at "politeness week" in Germany. On the contrary, I think we should have a "politeness week" of our own as soon as possible, or a "politeness month," or a "politeness year." We might even go so far as to have a war (since we must have it) conducted politely among ourselves, since we can't show politeness to the enemy.

DAVID SCOTT

SOVIET-WORSHIP

SIR,—We are sorry if Miss Rose Macaulay thinks we deliberately avoided answering her question at our "Russia Today" Brains Trust meeting on May 29th. I trust she will accept this assurance that nothing was further from our desires or intentions and that her particular question, along with a number of others that time did not permit the speakers to deal with, will be answered at our further meeting in the Conway Hall on June 17th. In the meantime an answer has been sent to Miss Macaulay by post.

As to the method of taking and dealing with questions at such meetings—whether they should be in oral or written form—surely this is an arguable matter and there are no grounds for imputing dishonest motives because we considered written questions to be best suited to meetings of this kind. This method enabled us to deal with many more questions, and cover a much wider ground, than would have been possible if the oral method had been employed. Of course, dishonest motives can be attributed to anyone where the desire to do so exists, and possibly as chairman of the meeting I should have been accused of favouritism by someone or other if oral questions had been the method pursued. Our method of taking and handling the questions may not have suited the role that the little group of Trotskyite interrupters came to play, but certainly 99 per cent. of the audience approved the course we took.

I shall not venture to trespass on your space to discuss what Miss Macaulay describes as an "uncritical and pathological Soviet-worship." The trouble, of course, with the friends of the Soviet Union has always been that they will persist in being friends of the Soviet Union and not something even a little bit less. If only we could have been brought to say that the Soviet Union was wrong in its home or foreign policy, or over the trials, or the Soviet-German Pact, or Finland, or the Baltic States, or some of the hundred and one other things for which the Soviet Union has been attacked but regarding which everybody now admits it was correct, how much nicer and more accommodating we should be. If Miss Macaulay really fears that we shall cause the British people to "weary of the name" of the Soviet Union, let her attend the anniversary celebration at the Empress Hall on June 20th, and her fears will be dispelled.

ALBERT INKPIN

THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

SIR,—Principal Murray is, of course, a controversialist. As an old hand at the game, I rather enjoyed the extremism of his statements, in comparison with which my own suggestions were moderation itself. For example, he tells us that "having bred children, parents are surely entitled to educate them as they themselves choose." Can he really mean this as an absolute principle? If followed out it means that children have no rights of their own as citizens to be, but are simply to be regarded as the private property of their parents. If we were to carry out Dr. Murray's principle to its logical conclusion, it would mean no State institutions for education at all; no State-schools, no colleges receiving grants from the State on its conditions. Very odd coming from the Principal of one!

In fact, our practice is much more moderate and sensible. Children are not regarded as the personal possessions of their parents, with no rights of their own. If parents maltreat or neglect their children, the State steps in to protect their rights. The same (correct) principle obtains with regard to their education. Really, I am a mere moderate compared with Principal Murray's parental totalitarianism.

Then, too, we all have to accept the common-sense fact that a great many parents are neither very interested, nor very competent to decide about the education of their children. Oddly enough, I got a letter last week from a well-known woman writer, who is the parent of as many children as Principal Murray, pointing out how many parents are not qualified, for one reason or another, to choose or guide their children's education. She used that as an argument for sending the children away out of their control to boarding schools. Principal Murray bases his case for sending them away from their parents on the precisely opposite reason. Which of them is right? It seems to me that the lady is a great deal more logical and has reason on her side. If the parents are so good at it, why be so keen on sending the children away from home?

I should have thought that as between these two contradictory parental positions, my own was a very

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MICHAEL JOSEPH

moderate and reasonable one. What it comes to is that there is a very great deal to be said for day-school education: it provides a balance between the influence of the home and the influence of the school. Between the two of them children have a chance of developing their own personality more freely.

It is not, I repeat, that I do not admire a great many things about the Public Schools, particularly the oldest and best of them. I want them to have the best chance of surviving in the new order, by concentrating their resources on the best of their number. But I do not want them to skim the cream of the secondary schools, which have their own character to form, their contribution to make. In my articles I was mainly engaged in stating their case—since it was so badly done by the Labour peers in the House of Lords.

It is not, again, that I wish Labour peers to take a strict party view on education. It is merely reasonable to expect that in a House nearly every one of whose hundreds of Members has a Public School background, the few Labour Members there should put the case for the nation's elementary and secondary schools reasonably and well.

So much for Mr. Murray's first point. It would be easy (and enjoyable) to go through the rest of his points, disposing of them one by one. But he has a sense of humour, I know; and would not expect me to take his very tendencious conclusions *au pied de la lettre*.

A. L. ROWSE

THE CREDULOUS PHYSICIAN

SIR,—Your writer of the "Credulous Physician" comes to some conclusions which cannot be accepted by chemists, pharmicists, biochemists or for that matter, surely, physicians. He asks whether dentists or physicians can be any less credulous than their forbears of 300 years ago. Surely modern organic chemistry cannot be classed with the blunderbuss pharmaceutical practice of that age.

The formulae of chemical compounds can be understood by physicians and dentists by reference to any of the systematic schemes of chemical nomenclature. Let us recall that an International Congress at Geneva has given us valuable rules for the naming of chemical compounds so that a few minutes' study can give any physician the structure of a particular compound.

There is no mysticism about a well-defined chemical compound. Rather the problem to-day is to solve the physical and chemical relations and reactions of these compounds in the human body. Ehrlich in his investigations of the organic arsenic compounds exemplifies the method used by organic chemists—it was substance No. 914 in Ehrlich's series which proved satisfactory and most suitable for administration.

If the chemist can, and should be compelled by law to do so, name his product according to one of the systems of nomenclature, "The Credulous Physician" will be able at a glance to note the groupings and the basic structure in the product which is more valuable than using the ashes of "the head of a coal-black cat."

One further point. "The Credulous Physician" refers to the process of trial and error in the administration of drugs. From his remarks, the thought may be spread abroad that drugs are used on the human species without any previous trial. Drugs and chemicals are submitted to prolonged and careful tests on rats, mice, rabbits and other animals so that the toxicity, dosage and all the other factors in the administration of the drug may be worked out before final trials on the human species.

KENNETH MACDONALD, Ph.C., A.I.C.

COAL AND THE NATION

SIR,—You repeat the accusation that coalowners are keeping back the most easily worked seams with a view to post-war profits. Mr. Grenfell has said on two occasions that this is not true. On what special knowledge do you base your assertion? If you would consult any mining engineer he would tell you that the development of any seam is a long and expensive business, and involves months or years of work in driving roadways and preparing faces, before production can begin. It is quite customary to plan for twenty years ahead and many factors must be considered, thicknesses, faults, gradients, surface cover, natural conditions, etc. Your statement is not only unfair; it is ridiculous.

You couple the management with the owners as opponents of nationalisation, or of unified control by a national coal board, and you say that managers are interested in preserving the present disorder. Many colliery managers believe in the principle of national ownership and control of all essentials; what they fear is the inevitable red tape and the consequent loss of efficiency.

Many of your statements are quoted from the miner M.P.s—excellent men, but in most cases men who have not worked underground for years and who are not familiar with mechanised working from day to day. The new machinery is not generally noisy, most of it consists of belt conveyors which are silent; and the amount of work done by a miner is less than it used to be in hand-getting days. It is, however, true to say that the work is often more tiring because the exhaustion of the thicker seams means that thinner ones must be worked. The production costs are naturally much higher.

COLLIERY MANAGER

EDUCATION: POINTS FROM LETTERS

Mr. Rowse sees a strengthening of the vocational side of children's education. Surely his insistence should be on a general cultural education for all children? Does he then agree with having three types of school, at present proposed, and with virtually prejudging the career of a child at 11? It does look as if he wants to see the "best public schools" standing in a world apart, and *some* of the secondary schools, which would seek specifically to prepare children for the universities, standing near them. Instead of proposing that the education of children should be made more real and effective by bringing it into closer relation with the natural and occupational background of their lives, does he not think it more important so to educate the children that they will be able to control that background?

E. J. WYNBURNE

Does Mr. Rowse agree that there should be distinctions of *status* within the secondary school system? The question at issue in the public mind is this status of the public schools, not their efficiency. The objection to them is absolute. If they are to live, it must be as resurrected beings, within an equalitarian system. The word "survival" is misleading.

Misleading also is the attack on "character." Obviously what the public schools have made of this conception should depart with them. But Mr. Rowse seems here to extend his original subject to education generally. Even so, his objection is surely too drastic. That education should emphasise a man's fitness to live agreeably and helpfully as a member of a community is a basic Socialist tenet. And is not this a function of character?

WELSH GRAD.

SIR,—I see no harm in religious instruction and would recommend that it be carried out thoroughly and scientifically as a branch of philosophy on the principle that the future citizen be rendered capable of determining his beliefs for himself, independently of clergy or parents. But I cannot see how a religious education can be given except as part of a system which, as a whole, is as complete as the total resources of human knowledge can make it; none of the champions of sectarian doctrines make such a claim for the children as this: maybe they recognise the incompatibilities involved and have fear for their interests. I am a parent myself, and though I have religious beliefs of my own, I still think that my children should have the opportunity, and the responsibility, of making a suitable choice for themselves. I would like, therefore, to have every reasonable religious claim put before them in State schools without prejudice in favour of any one.

G. H. WILBRAHAM

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METHUEN

BOOKS IN GENERAL

HERE is a new volume of essays by Virginia Woolf, entitled *The Death of the Moth* (Hogarth Press 9*s*.); and, with it, Mr. E. M. Forster's Rede Lecture (*Virginia Woolf*, Cambridge University Press 1*s*. 6*d*.), a summing up exemplary in its shrewdness and delicacy. He had known Mrs. Woolf intimately for many years, and begins by discounting the legend, invented by some glorious ass of a reviewer, that presented her as The Invalid Lady of Bloomsbury: "She was full of interests, and their number increased as she grew older, she was curious about life, and she was tough, sensitive but tough." These new essays alone are enough to show her variety of mood and thought. We listen to her envisaging the Sussex of five hundred years hence; analysing the work of George Moore and Mr. Forster; wandering through the streets of London; discussing professions for women—"the cheapness of writing paper is, of course, the reason why women have succeeded as writers before they have succeeded in any other profession"; asking why undergraduates still go to lectures, though the printing press has been invented these many centuries; portraying Gibbon, Sara Coleridge, and Henry James; going to the theatre; watching a dwarf buy shoes; teasing the young poets of to-day for wishing to publish their poems (as if all young poets had not always, and very naturally, wanted an audience); jeering at the Middlebrows in a burst of pride and high spirits; contemplating in the microcosm of a moth the enigma of death and of the impulse to live.

"She respected and acquired knowledge," Mr. Forster continues, "she believed in wisdom." One of the new essays is a letter addressed, but, alas, never sent, to this journal, in which she defines the Highbrow as "a man or woman of thoroughbred intelligence who rides his mind at a gallop across country in pursuit of an idea." That is why, she adds, she always has been so proud to be called a Highbrow. The daughter of Leslie Stephen, Virginia Woolf was by heredity an intellectual, although sometimes her imagination could play old Harry with her logic. Nobody could have more regard for the life of the mind, and specially the art of letters. She loathed humbug, priggery, everything ready-made or second-rate. "She is a poet, who wants to write something as near to a novel as possible." Here we are at the heart of the critical case. Granted that she wrote supremely well—and in my opinion nobody has ever written finer prose—how good was she as a novelist? The argument often rages, and, as in most arguments, your conclusion must depend upon your definition. In 1919 she attacked the method of the Edwardian novelists, Wells, Bennett, Galsworthy. For all their skill and high-mindedness, "life escapes," she declared, "and perhaps without life nothing else is worth while."

> Life, it seems, is very far from being "like this." Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions—trivial, fantastic, evanescent or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms . .

Life she concludes, is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. The first published fragments of *Ulysses* were the occasion of this sortie, but it is a defence not so much of what Joyce had done, as of what she was engaged in doing. And three years later she published *Jacob's Room*, the first of her novels to use the technique perfected in *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*.

We are fascinated, even at a tenth or twentieth reading, to know what Mr. Bennet will say when Lydia elopes, how the Sanseverina will treat the perjured Prince of Parma, how M. de Charlus will take Mme. Verdurin's snub. It is much more difficult to interest us in the sensations and images that the sound of a lawn-mower, the glimpse of a kingfisher or of an old riding-crop, send swimming into the fancy of a wraith. And though, when Virginia Woolf is writing, such things become absorbing, our interest in them differs from that excited by the great novels; it resembles rather, in tempo and volume, the interest we take in De Quincey, in Dorothy Wordsworth's Journal, in Cowper's letters, or even in a Helicon of Elizabethan songs. "Let your rhythmical sense wind itself in and out among men and women, omnibuses, sparrows—whatever come along the street—until it has strung them together in one harmonious whole." This is the advice she gives to a poet, but does it not define her practice as a novelist? If the youthful Miss Austen, the apprentice Balzac, had been warned that the art of fiction was a matter of depicting "a luminous halo," "an incessant shower of innumerable atoms," imagine their bewilderment.

It was, I fancy, because her talent was of a different metal, that Virginia Woolf sought to deflect the tradition of the novel from its dependence upon situation and character. She declared that she was immeasurably curious about human beings:

> I always sit next the conductor in an omnibus and try to get him to tell me what it is like—being a conductor. In whatever company I am, I always try to know what it is like—being a conductor, being a woman with ten children and thirty-five shillings a week, being a stockbroker, being an admiral, being a bank-clerk, being a dressmaker, being a duchess, being a miner, being a cook, being a prostitute.

Though she tried to know, I think she rarely succeeded. For one thing, the very fineness of her temperament prevented her putting herself effectively in other people's shoes. She knew by report, but with not an atom of fellow feeling, what it was to delight in ostentation, to enjoy buying bodies, to revere the conventions. Balzac and Tolstoy and Proust did not merely describe such emotions, they imaginatively could experience them. "The great novelist," she writes, "feels, sees, believes with such intensity of conviction that he hurls his belief outside himself, and it flies off and lives an independent life of its own." Virginia Woolf's curiosity about the people she met was, moreover, always apt to be quickly satisfied by the force of her own fancy. Before she had penetrated any distance into the life of the admiral or the dressmaker, she had already formed images of them, immense inverted pyramids wavering above the slenderest foundation of fact. Her characters, therefore, however artfully silhouetted by a few details, are fugitive and wraith-like; they bob up for a moment brilliantly lit, but we are not given the illusion of their having a life off the stage, experiences other than those fragments she describes.

In these new essays she often recurs to the gulf between fact and imagination. She is in the street on a winter evening looking into a jeweller's:

> Let us choose these pearls, for example, and then imagine how, if we put them on, life would be changed. It becomes instantly between two and three in the morning; the lamps are burning very white in the deserted streets of Mayfair. Only motor-cars are abroad at this hour, and one has a sense of emptiness, of airiness, of secluded gaiety. Wearing pearls, wearing silk, one steps out on to a balcony which overlooks the gardens of sleeping Mayfair. There are a few lights in the bedrooms of great peers returned from Court, of silk-stockinged footmen, of dowagers who have pressed the hands of statesmen . . . Strolling sedately as if he were promenading a terrace beneath which the shires and counties of England lie sun-bathed, the aged Prime Minister recounts to Lady So-and-So with the curls and the emeralds the true history of some great crisis in the affairs of the land . . .

You may protest that the aged Prime Minister is as romantic a figment as the silk of the footmen's stockings, but I think that here she is laughing a little at her own flights. "Is it the true self," she is left wondering, "this which stands on the pavement in January, or that which bends over the balcony in June? Am I here, or am I there?" In another essay she decides that "words are not useful":

> A useful statement is a statement that can mean only one thing. And it is the nature of words to mean many things. Take the simple sentence "Passing Russell Square." That proved useless because besides the surface meaning it contained many sunken meanings. The word "passing" suggested the transiency of things, the passing of time and the changes of human life. Then the word "Russell" suggested the rustling of leaves and the skirt on a polished floor; also the duchy house of Bedford and half the history of England. Finally, the word "Square" brings in the sight, the shape of an actual square combined with some visual suggestion of the stark angularity of stucco.

This is the confession of a poet rather than a novelist: the imagination is shown bolting, like a horse with the reins over its head. No wonder that one comes on inaccuracies that would have appalled Mr. Arnold Bennett—champagne bottles are opened with a corkscrew, syphons crop up in just the places where syphons never show their heads, in the clubs of St. James's Street.

But the defect of Virginia Woolf's novels is not that they are unrealistic. They succeed indeed in representing our daily experience of life more closely, perhaps, than any other novels. But nobody nowadays would suggest that it was the artist's business to give the closest representation of either facts or appearances. The scrupulous notation of reflected colour in a late Monet is little more satisfactory than the detailed information provided by an early Millais. And if the novels of an Arnold Bennett sink under the weight of fact, Virginia Woolf's float upwards and lose themselves in a delicious, veracious, but unsubstantial shimmer. "She reminds us," says Mr. Forster, "of the importance of sensation in an age which practises brutality and recommends ideals." I doubt whether sensations have ever been more keenly communicated, but a novel made almost entirely of sensations is like a painting in which colour and texture are unsupported by drawing. For this reason the example and the advice given by Virginia Woolf to novelists seem to me unlucky. To complain that her novels are not like other novels is foolish, but the method she invented was suited only to herself.

Reading *The Death of the Moth* and re-reading the two volumes of *The Common Reader*, I even wonder whether these may not be her most certain successes. Furthermore, a short paper on Mme. de Sévigné gives one a notion that she might have made a masterpiece of the life of some such figure—Mme. de Sévigné herself, or Horace Walpole, or Pepys, or Fanny Burney. She had an extraordinary sense of the past; and while the remoteness in time would have given a freedom and a romantic stimulus that she lacked in her admirable biography of Roger Fry, the volume of given facts would have leaded the keel beneath the racing spread of her sails. I have said that nobody, in my opinion, has written finer prose. One envies Virginia Woolf, as one envies Watteau or Renoir, the power of seeing the world so beautiful—her eye "breaks off little lumps of emerald and coral as if the whole world were made of precious stone." Her handling of words keeps pace with her vision, and Mr. Woolf reveals that she revised eight or nine times even her more casual articles. "She liked writing," Mr. Forster says, "with an intensity which few writers have attained, or even desired." Her work, one feels, was a lark as well as a religion. The result is a freshness unparalleled. By comparison the other writers of imaginative prose appear laboured or pompous in their gait. The care she took ends in an appearance of spontaneity such as one finds elsewhere only in diaries and letters. Perhaps, indeed, one might define her style as a power to give the permanence of art to the spoken word without dimming its flicker or thumbing its bloom. This style transfigures our surroundings, like the light of early morning; and we catch from it a new power, whether we are strolling through the streets or reading for ourselves about the dead, of selecting, as Virginia Woolf did, details that are significant or intrinsically delightful.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

THE SADDUCEE

The Saturday Review, 1855-1868. By MERLE M. BEVINGTON. *Oxford Press.* 23s. 6d.

"I grind steadily away sneering at virtue and enthusiasm in *The Saturday Review*," wrote Leslie Stephen to Oliver Wendell Holmes. The not very ancient but solitary reign of the English highbrow had begun. By the fifties of the last century, educated persons, mainly drawn from the universities, found themselves sufficiently numerous and financially safe to set up a kind of state within the state of the English middle class. In weekly reviews and notably in *The Saturday Review*, they found their voice.

The present study of the paper by a scrupulous American investigator is an excellent introduction to the tone of that voice and what it said. Does it matter what this captious and clever forefather said? The answer is that we tend to know the history of opinion, the texture of a civilisation, by the great, and that the great are exceptional. We hear opinion in its summary and injudicious contrasts, the mere black and white of it. The great lead or mislead their times. But behind them march the cautious platoons of the talented and instructed, the intermediaries between genius and its assimilation; from their verdicts we may learn not indeed to what an age aspired, but what parts of the reckless diet offered to it an age could digest. There is therefore a great deal to be said for Miss Bevington's argument that in the old files of a paper like *The Saturday Review* the reader can get a more representative sample of the opinions of the educated mid-Victorians than can be got from prophets like Carlyle, men of genius like Darwin, the social clamour of people like Dickens or the intellects of Arnold and Ruskin. The *Saturday Sadducee* or *Reviler* as it was called did not profess to lead opinion, the role it chose was one of criticism and assay. And here the *Saturday* had to meet that charge which is from time to time brought against the well educated and which has especially been brought against them since they have formed a separate community: they are negative, they have no programme. The highbrow develops a kind of detached and sedentary sportiveness, a collection of professional tastes and customs like those of the Church, Medicine or the Bar. Criticism, as most creative minds have thought with anger at one time or another, is one of the vested interests.

Walter Bagehot hit off this maddening, amused independence of the *Saturday* in an article on Gladstone where, after thanking heaven that Gladstone was "Oxford on the surface *but* Liverpool below," he went on to this aside:

> *The Saturday Review* is remarkable as an attempt on the part of "university men" to speak on the political topics and social difficulties of the time. And what do they teach us? It is something like this—"So-and-so has written a tolerable book and we would call attention to the industry which produces tolerable books. So-and-so has devoted himself to a great subject and we would say that the interest now taken in great subjects is very commendable. Such and such a lady has delicate feelings which are desirable in a lady, though we know that they are contrary to the facts of the world. All common persons are doing as well as they can, but it does not come to much after all. All statesmen are doing as ill as they can, and let us be thankful that *that* does not come to much either."

The sense of the *Saturday's* reply to this was, briefly, according to Miss Bevington, that the educated really regarded themselves as above the middle-class forces struggling for power. I wonder how true that generalisation is. Certainly, the educated, as represented by the *Saturday*, loathed the social theories of Ruskin.

This book is copiously illustrated by extracts from reviews and the first thing one notices is how much we would agree with many of the *Saturday's* judgments. Fitzjames Stephen, Leslie Stephen's brother, was one of the paper's standbys—he left it for a time and the proprietor remarked that "his departure will raise the religious tone of the paper"—and he was pretty sound, for example, on Carlyle. There was nothing capricious about the *Saturday's* standards. Carlyle said nothing new, Fitzjames Stephen wrote, opening with the usual *Saturday* gambit, but he said it in a new way. He was interesting for his sense of scene and theatre and not for his ideas. The idea of the "hero as a man of letters" did not convince the critic who earned three guineas an article. On the whole, the *Saturday* was not very interested in imaginative literature and especially not in the novel. Here the paper was bristling at its cardinal enemy: the sentimentality of the age. The reviewers wanted to cut the reformist ideas out of Dickens, pointing out (as a modern critic, Mr. Humphry House, has done) that Dickens followed clamour about social abuses and did not initiate it. The *Tale of Two Cities* was called "stewed cat and puppy pie." The reviewers were rather ashamed of enjoying Trollope—he was, of course, exactly up their street—and rapped Thackeray for his sermons and the shallowness of his philosophy of life. The shallowness of nearly everybody's philosophy of life was always conscientiously exposed by the reviewers. The first number contained a remarkable analysis of the war passages in Tennyson's *Maud*. George Eliot was admired for her art and her brains, though what was called the prolonged midwifery in *Adam Bede* caused that terror which finds a saviour in smoke-room wit.

The *Saturday* took the unusual line, for the period, of being tough about sex. This was, of course, an alibi. As anti-sentimentalists, the reviewers could treat the question of prostitution with surprising realism and disliked the pious light of philanthropy in which the mid-Victorians like to view the subject. But when it came to the realistic treatment of sex in literature the view then was that sex was a sort of error. ("A great literary error" was the description given of *Don Juan*). And Meredith, whose work was admired, was violently attacked for the sonnets of *Modern Love*. He was told to consult Tennyson's *Guinevere* and that "it would have been just as reasonable to compose a sonnet on the gout or the smallpox."

There is a mass of curious information in this book which is well arranged, discerning and pleasantly written. By 1864 the circulation of the *Saturday* appears to have been about 20,000, and the usual size of the paper was 40 to 44 pages including 12 to 20 of advertisements. 1855 to 1868 was the best period. After that it gradually declined and, unluckily, this book contains only a short chapter on the dazzling revival under Frank Harris. By the present century the final stages were quickly reached. Academic conservatism and Common Room sense gave place to the Conservative Party, a much lower association. I do not mean that the paper became a party organ; simply that the party hung like a shadow over it. The educated were in fact becoming committed. In the end it was an awful irony that this once virile and anti-feminist journal, which always raised its eyebrows when a woman succeeded in literature or in public life, should have succumbed in the gushing embrace of Lady Houston.

V. S. PRITCHETT

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the armies of the U.S.S.R. would be quickly knocked out, and the people rise against Stalin. But Ambassador Davies really informed himself and the American Government about the nature of the Soviet Union and the strength of its organisation. He had the sense to treat the American correspondents there as friends and colleagues; they pooled knowledge and sought an agreed interpretation. Davies, a friend of Mr. Roosevelt, a wealthy lawyer and business expert, was not a professional diplomat. His own views are typically American. When, on his departure from Moscow, Stalin paid him the exceptional compliment of an unsolicited interview, Mr. Davies remarked that he, of course, was a capitalist. Stalin replied with a smile that no one had ever had any doubt about that. But Stalin, Litvinov, and the other Soviet chiefs had long reached the conclusion that he was disinterested and friendly. They noticed that he took the trouble to travel to every industrial district and that he assessed correctly the development of Russia's war potential. What did it matter if he commented on the growth of inequality in the U.S.S.R. and repeated clichés about human nature always remaining the same? The Stakhanovite movement and the development of piece-rate pay confirmed his theory that Communism was unnatural; so did the marked difference in position and privilege of the bureaucrats who ran the Soviet machine. Davies was wont to remark that the American system of government was the best in the world and to say that no country could build a good society except on a Christian foundation. He objected to a legal system which did not assume innocence until guilt was proved. But his individualism, Christianity, humanism and capitalist outlook never at any time prevented him making a fair appreciation of the terrific achievements of the Soviet Union. He understood its strength; the firm foundation of the Revolution; its political and economic stability. He took the leaders of the Soviet Union for what they were, able, disciplined, and determined men with the interests of the masses at heart and a clear picture of the new society they were building, for which they would, if necessary, sacrifice everything and everybody, including themselves.

Ambassador Davies reaped the reward of this realism. The British Ambassador, Lord Chilston, who is mentioned, I think, twice in this book, is green with envy because Mr. Davies' wife is invited to a hen party at Molotov's house. This was apparently a unique event. The Litvinov family treated Mr. Davies as an intimate friend, and on several occasions during the purges Ambassador Davies heard from Litvinov a realistic interpretation of what was proceeding. In effect, Litvinov told him, the Soviet Government was running no risks. There was opposition; there were plots. Rather a thousand innocent die than one guilty escape. It was regrettable that the purge should reach dimensions which upset industry, temporarily weakened the army and did immense harm to the prestige of the Soviet Union abroad. But, Litvinov pointed out prophetically, it would be found that Stalin had effectively rid Russia of all Fifth Columnist elements, and the day would come when his greatness would be recognised. At the time Ambassador Davies did not fully appreciate the strength of this case. He was perturbed by the arbitrary behaviour of the G.P.U., the immense number of arrests and the Terror which he describes without flinching. Later, in July, 1941, when Hitler attacked Russia, he wrote a remarkable paper, given in this book, justifying the purge. No traitors or Fifth Columnists were found alive in the U.S.S.R.

Any objective picture of Soviet Russia is of incalculable value. It is easy to find people who were quite sure that the purges were a proof that Stalin's Government would break down at a blow; easy again to meet those who, in spite of Stalin's own admission that it had gone too far and in spite of the successive executions as liars and saboteurs of the heads of the G.P.U. who had themselves organised thousands of executions, that there was nothing to worry about or criticise in the purges. But if drastic measures were necessary in the conditions of Russia to get rid of internal enemies, so too ought criticism of their admitted excesses to be recognised as salutary. I know of no one in touch with those terrific events in U.S.S.R. who kept his head so well as Ambassador Davies. Transferred from Moscow to Brussels in 1938, he was able to warn the British Governments of the danger of failing to make an alliance with the Soviet Union. He foresaw the alternative that would be forced on Stalin and understood the significance of Litvinov's retirement in the spring of 1939. If Britain had had more ambassadors abroad of this quality and a Premier of the quality of Mr. Roosevelt, the history of the world would have been different and happier. Fortunately, as Litvinov himself says in a warm recommendation of this book, it is not too late even now to repair some of the damage done by past failures to face facts. "The greatest value of the book seems to me that, by bringing the Soviet Union home to the American people through its pages, Ambassador Davies is continuing at home his mission to Moscow. And this mission—the creation of a better understanding between the two countries—acquires special importance now, when their people have become companions in arms, and will, after the fighting is over, be trusted with the common tasks of reconstruction."

KINGSLEY MARTIN

A DETECTIVE MASTERPIECE

Tragedy at Law. By CYRIL HARE. *Faber and Faber.* 7s. 6d.

The Seat of the Scornful. By JOHN DICKSON CARR. *Hamish Hamilton.* 8s.

The Body in the Library. By AGATHA CHRISTIE. *Collins.* 7s. 6d.

The Deadly Truth. By HELEN MCCLOY. *Hamish Hamilton.* 7s. 6d.

A Bagful of Bones. By ALAN KENNINGTON. *Jarrolds.* 7s. 6d.

Laurels are Poison. By GLADYS MITCHELL. *Michael Joseph.* 8s. 6d.

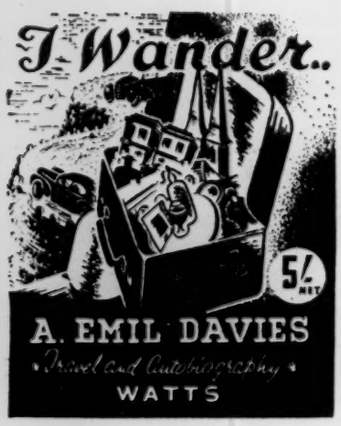
Diabolic Candelabra. By E. R. PUNSHON. *Gollancz.* 8s. 6d.

No Past is Dead. By J. J. CONNINGTON. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 8s. 6d.

Good Night, Sheriff. By HARRISON R. STEEVES. *Rich and Cowan.* 8s. 6d.

Midnight House. By ETHEL LINA WHITE. *Collins.* 8s.

Most detection is written to a formula, because human powers of invention are limited. It is easier to write variations on an old theme than to think of a new one. But on some rare occasion an author rises from the ruck with an original idea and towers above his fellows. Mr. Cyril Hare now finds himself in this glorious situation. The other books in this list will be forgotten in a twelvemonth, but *Tragedy at Law* should be sure of appreciative readers for years to come. The publishers compare the book to *Murder Must Advertise*, but, for a wonder, they err in understatement. Though the style is less brilliant, the narrative is as smooth, vivid and sustained as that of Miss Sayers' most famous work, and superior in finish. I can never forget or forgive the garish interludes in *Murder Must Advertise* that presage Lord Peter's *dégringolade* into the limbo of a schoolmarm's day-



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ream. The two books are alike in the use made f special knowledge, and in the self-confidence nd fluency produced by describing personal xperiences. Miss Sayers showed us the human echanism behind the façade of a modern dvertising agency. Mr. Hare takes us behind he scenes of Justice, introducing us to the ntourage of Sir William Barber, a High Court udge on circuit. This round of Assizes seems o resemble more than anything the tour of a epertory company. Not only does the Judge ravel everywhere with his own staff, clerk, Marshal, servants and, if available, wife, who, like heatrical dressers, are there to equip him to lay his part on the bench. But the other actors n the legal dramas, the barristers attached to the Circuit, are necessarily the same and have to ravel round with the Judge. Only the audiences, he juries and criminals, are local inhabitants. Such a natural stage has never before, as far as know, been employed for a detective novel until Mr. Hare came along and made it his own. There s an excellent plot in *Tragedy at Law*, but it is nfortunately impossible even to outline for fear f betraying its secret subtlety. The characters re so real as to be almost alarming. Rebarbative Mr. Justice Barber himself, his shrewd, attractive wife, his peculiar clerk, his young, inexperienced Marshal, and above all, Pettigrew, an unsuccessful barrister on the circuit, are all drawn to the life. Mr. Dickson Carr has also tried to draw a portrait of a High Court Judge, but it would be here mockery to compare it with Mr. Hare's. n *The Seat of the Scornful*, Mr. Justice Ireton, fter complacently sentencing a man to death at he local assizes, is found by the police holding revolver opposite the body of a man he has very reason to wish dead. A nasty set-up for a udge, who is a hearty believer in circumstantial vidence! If that were not enough, the Judge as just had the temerity to defeat Dr. Fell at hess, so you can imagine to what stupendous engths Mr. Dickson Carr will go to put him on he spot. Stupendous is the word. I have ever known even Mr. Dickson Carr outrage he credibilities so barefacedly. Fortunately, if is psychology goes from bad to worse, his arrative style improves, as the years roll by, and his cat's cradle of nonsense is delightfully readible.

Mrs. Christie is so hard-working that she must ccasionally take an afternoon off. *The Body in he Library* is inferior to her best writing. The asis of the plot is ingenious enough, but there s hardly enough material to bulk out a full-length novel. Eking out what there is, chapter by chapter, Mrs. Christie seems to lose heart herself over the length of the proceedings. The body was found in the library of a respectable county colonel by the housemaid one morning; the body was female, pretty, strangled. That looks all right to us and the police, but it did not look all right to Miss Marple. Her detective principle is that all criminals are childish and she has only to find the correct analogy with one of the naughtier village schoolchildren to identify a murderer offhand. I prefer Poirot.

Miss McCloy had a truth machine in her last book; she has an American addition to quasi-science. In *The Deadly Truth* a scientist invents a truth drug (rather unscientifically called "truth serum") which makes you speak the truth for three hours after imbibing it. A society lady steals the stuff to enliven a cocktail party, and within the three hours so much truth has come out that strangling the hostess seems too merciful an end. Dr. Basil Willing appears on the scene as the psychologist detective and imposes a somewhat arbitrary solution. Miss McCloy is competent but lacks finesse. She might learn to use science as a probe rather than a bludgeon in her detection.

A Bagful of Bones is about a girls' school, and *Laurels are Poison* about a women's training college. The atmosphere of hullabaloo is the same at both. In Mr. Alan Kennington's school the unpopular French mistress meets her death at the telephone in the middle of a school performance of *Macbeth*. The school is highly exaggerated but amusing; only the criminal part of the story falls flat, and Mr. Kennington employs a most wretched sentimental detective. Miss Gladys Mitchell is as fantastic as ever. Her old crocodile, Mrs. Bradley, becomes warden over a lot of schoolmistresses in *Laurels Are Poison* in order to investigate the mysterious disappearance of her predecessor. With the old croc. about, the conversation becomes unbuttoned, the characters unbridled, while each stage of the mystery is more preposterous than the last. Miss Mitchell's enthusiasts will like the book enormously.

It is pleasant to find Mr. Punshon back in form. In *Diabolic Candelabra* an old hermit is missing from his hut in a Wychshire forest, while many years earlier the candelabra, attributed to Cellini, and a few El Grecos were missing from a neighbouring mansion. Bobby Owen connects these disappearances, is brisker than usual over the routine checking-up, makes an elfin friend in the forest, and finally plunges through the brushwood to an exciting *dénouement*.

No Past is Dead has rather a tame plot, but is justified by one of the most wonderful alibis I have ever seen built up. Indeed, Mr. Connington must have defeated the ends of justice, had he not betrayed his criminal by a second murder. Generally elaborate cast-iron alibis make dull reading, but this one is exceptional and I recommend the book for that alone.

Good Night, Sheriff is not a Western, but straight detection written by an American Professor of English, who at the age of sixty, we are told, "is still covering life in long strides." Not a very promising outlook! But the idea of the plot is excellent. A country doctor's wife in New England trotting home through a forest one afternoon in a thunderstorm is shot dead at long range by a high velocity bullet. She had no enemies in the world, but the shot must have been deliberate. The local Sheriff is satisfied to leave it a mystery, but an insurance investigator is sent down from New York to get a satisfactory explanation. The narrative is uneven. Some good character-drawing is interspersed with trivial details, and the pace is very slow. The wise reader will emulate the author and cover the book in long strides.

The latest Ethel Lina White is intended to send a shiver down the spine on every page. The victim in *Midnight House* of a murky climate, a Victorian neighbourhood, a Jack the Ripper in tights on roller-skates, two uncontrollable children, a sinister employer and an empty house next door is that predestined prey of thriller-writers, the eternal governess. Miss White's style gets more and more staccato, but she never relaxes her strumming on the reader's nerves. She will blunt them in the end if she is not careful.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

THE BOSWELL BROTHERS

This Blessed Plot. By HESKETH PEARSON and HUGH KINGSMILL. *Methuen.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

The original idea of this book—but perhaps it was never meant to be more than an idea—was that the authors should set out from Marlborough and wander through the Shakespeare country towards Stratford, "piecing Shakespeare together" as they went. The journey was planned in the winter after Munich, at a time when everyone was planning a last journey of some kind, and this had the advantage that it could be carried out, war or no war. The Bard,

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Company Meeting

SMITH'S POTATO CRISPS

SIR HERBERT MORGAN'S SPEECH

THE thirteenth ordinary general meeting of Smith's Potato Crisps (1929), Ltd., was held on June 3rd in London.

Sir Herbert Morgan, K.B.E. (the chairman), in the course of his speech, said: We are proposing the same dividend as last year and also the same cash bonus. This fact, I have no doubt, you will accept as the best proof that can be offered of the continued success of your company, which yearly grows from strength to strength. The strength of our position is very conclusive proof of the value of our company to the community.

It must be remembered that Smith's Crisps, compared to the ordinary potato, are more nutritious and produce more heat and energy. Smith's Potato Crisps are 92 per cent. solid food—the ordinary boiled potato 18 per cent. Crisps contain 33 per cent. of fats owing to the fine oil in which they are cooked. All the mineral salts are preserved, encased in oil—and remember, our crisps do not fatten. Not only are they supreme in value as food, but their nature is such that they exactly suit the lives of millions of people living under war conditions.

Our consumers represent every section of the public, particularly His Majesty's Forces and the British workers. The Army, Navy, Air Force, and the British workers deserve very special consideration in everything concerning their food. They represent the energy, skill and determination of the nation. If I may express a very personal view, I believe that the mass of the workers of this country, while welcoming direction and a reasoned presentation of the necessity for their own individual output, are sometimes over-preached to. Most of the urges which have been applied to the stimulation of greater output are accepted by the vast majority of men and women with enthusiasm. They must not be deadened and confused by too many exhortations from too many sources for too many purposes.

So far as our own staff is concerned, the full knowledge of the purpose they serve in producing our particular form of food for those engaged in the war effort, gives them all the incentive they need.

To us, it is cause for pride that the potato which we produce as Smith's Potato Crisps not only is a home-grown product but is largely grown by ourselves in the wonderfully fertile soil of the Eastern Counties. As you know, not only have we our own farms of upwards of 10,000 acres, which make an important contribution to our particular product but we are also growing under contract large areas of potatoes on the finest farming land in England. Naturally, it will be understood that our estate, which is administered under the most scientific principles, is not limited to the growing of potatoes. It also makes a very substantial contribution to the country's food supplies in wheat, barley, oats, sugar beet and livestock—pigs, sheep and cattle.

The founder of the business, Mr. Frank Smith, has temporarily lost Mr. Cyril Scott's assistance in sales activities and has many extra burdens to carry.

The report was unanimously adopted.

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too, was in the ascendant; Chamberlain's nettle had been followed by a general shuffle of texts and concordances. No matter what opinion you held, whether you were a Municheer or Mosleyite or a rattled Socialist, Shakespeare was on your side. How could Englishmen possibly go to war without discovering again what it is to be an Englishman by reading the appropriate bits?

Messrs. Pearson and Kingsmill joined the racket, ready to boom and to poke a little fun at the same time. The spirit of Shakespeare . . . "Shakespeare," exclaimed Mr. Pearson, deafened by Hitler speeches, "went through exactly what we are going through now—'Bragging horror' is what he calls it. And it was the spirit of Shakespeare that beat Spain, just as it will be the spirit of Shakespeare that will smash these Nordic Dagos." There speaks the blurb of the book that might have been, if a publisher accepted guilelessly, and if Pearson and Kingsmill weren't a pair of hard-bitten fruity comedians. Their trumpet tones slur off into raspberries. They pick on the most sentimental of journeys in order to spout and exchange patter by the way. Shakespeare is only the release for an inveterate literary tourism. Once before they set off for the Hebrides to follow in the footsteps of Johnson and Boswell; here they are, on a new scent, in the train moving out of Paddington:

> *Pearson* (*looking out of the window*): Poor old Shakespeare! How those factory chimneys would have got him down!
>
> *Kingsmill*: How everything *did* get him down!
>
> *Pearson*: Yes, his England wasn't a paradise either—the landscape dotted with gibbets, the festering corpses dangling in chains . . .

The conversation veers to *Timon*, Shakespeare's pessimism, tirades on sex and, as the train nears Goring, Oscar Wilde; Reading Gaol—"Oscar's last country house"—slides out of view and the vista of crime suggests a remark by Sherlock Holmes on the wickedness hidden away in English villages. It is not so much conversation as a running journalism *à deux*, a conversation piece out of a novel, say, by Peacock, truculent and gay, dogmatic, crusted with reminiscence. Sometimes Pearson struts ahead, sometimes the boom comes from Kingsmill, sometimes they stand side by side in a high street or before a famous landmark, impartially delivering comment.

The backcloth changes, the chat rattles on. What *This Blessed Plot* would have been like if its authors had kept to the Shakespeare trail it is hard to guess, though no doubt they would have found means of keeping a tit-for-tat going. As it is jaunts to Avon and Arden are followed by others, well outside the Shakespeare belt, to Bristol, Hastings, and Harrow-on-the-hill; and discussion stretches as far afield as St. Paul, P. G. Wodehouse at the Adlon, the rejected stanzas of Gray's Elegy, a portrait of Fielding, Frank Harris, adventures in interviewing, week-ending, being a schoolmaster or on the stage. There seems to be no topic on which Messrs. P. and K. aren't downright: Mr. P., for example, possibly the more truculent of the two, hates dogs and Karl Marx, and thinks Conan Doyle underrated, while Mr. K. is sardonic and appreciative about Wells, Ireland, Winston—in fact, about most things. Together they put up a formidable barrage of opinion, designed to shock any too gentle reader who may open the book unawares. The duologue, joined by bits of narrative in the third person, adds pungency to collaboration, because the writers are pretty evenly matched and egg each other on. Both have a background of books, journalism, travel and memorable encounters, which fit together well. *This Blessed Plot* has been ingeniously winnowed from meetings and journeys spread over the last three years. Its voltage is always a little higher than we expect, and what a merit that is in literary journalism! G. W. STONIER

OUT OF CHINA

A Leaf in the Storm. By LIN YUTANG. *Heinemann.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

Dragon Seed. By PEARL S. BUCK. *Macmillan.* 9*s.*

China Rediscovers Her West. By MADAME CHIANG KAI-SHEK AND OTHERS. *Allen & Unwin.* 6*s.*

A master-theme ought, in theory, to give dramatic tension to a novel. In practice it is excessively difficult to compose a tale whose characters illustrate a thesis; the subject is apt to block up the centre, and the personages to appear around the edges pointing at it in dim symbolic attitudes. Both *A Leaf in the Storm* and *Dragon Seed* are written to interpret China at war to Western readers, and they must be appraised as novels and as propaganda. Mr. Lin Yutang's book is not an entirely successful novel, it turns upon the effect of the war upon Poya, a rich dilettante youth, Lao Peng, a Buddhist teacher, and Malin, a charming courtesan. Her passionate love for Poya, superseded, to her dismay, by love of the heart for Peng; her work for refugees as she and her friends shift to the interior, her renunciation of Peng in order to be adopted into Poya's family after he is killed, as his widow, and to continue its line with his unborn child, are the threads running through the book. But it is impossible to feel deeply stirred by this plaintive tale. Poya is the most tenuous of figures, used mainly to voice strategic theories of the war and reflections upon love. Peng is more solid; his warmth and charity, his humanistic religion, make an attractive portrait of the Chinese sage. Malin, tiny, tender, gay, lettered a little in the Chinese classics, seeking love through her transient episodes with men who only want a mistress, is probably Lin Yutang's ideal woman. He dislikes the modern Chinese girl, whom in the person of Poya's wife he rejects for a Hard-Hearted Hannah, demoralised by playing basket-ball; and like most sentimental writers in this dilemma he falls back upon the Honey-Hearted Hetaira. But the story does not matter much; Mr. Lin Yutang is an essayist born, and the book abounds in beautifully written and sometimes poignant essays; on the guerilla fighting in Hopei villages, with Mrs. Chao, the great guerilla leader, "like a sweet old Chinese grandmother" collecting arms for her troops; on the sack of Nanking; on the Chinese victory at Taierchuang; on the nightmare-ridden Chinese peasant who does not know if the child in her womb is her husband's or the Japanese soldier's who killed him; on Madame Chiang Kai-shek doing salvage work after a raid on Hankow; on lighter things, the Chinese idea of the shape of woman's beauty, ovals, face and shoulders and torso; and on finer, Buddhist meditations and the philosophy of courage, service and kindness which are voiced by Peng as human universals. These passages are like light and shadow blowing across the dark landscape of the war.

Pearl Buck is a story-teller born. I defy anybody to stop reading this tale once they have started it. And in the war she has a plot better than any she has used since *The Good Earth*. Her writing is rather stiffened and formalised; by which I mean that apart from the biblical style, which is natural enough to an author thinking out of the vocabulary of peasant Chinese into English, she is perhaps too conscientiously earthy. Obstetrics and evacuation are no longer surprising topics in literature, and can be mentioned without that earnestly unshocked expression. But the author has returned to her first love, the country people, those whom she feels

Company Meeting

MARKS AND SPENCER

POLICY OF BEST VALUES

The Sixteenth Ordinary General Meeting of Marks and Spencer Limited was held on June 9th in London.

Following are extracts from the statement by the chairman, Mr. Simon Marks, D.Sc., circulated with the report and accounts.

The profits for the year amount to £1,553,088, as compared with last year's profits of £2,125,552. We have had to provide £472,995 for taxation, which, with the carry forward from last year of £346,530, leaves available for distribution £1,456,623 as against £1,230,479 last year.

It will be seen that while the company's profits, before making provision for taxation, are £842,264 less than the previous year, the amount available after making provision for taxation is £201,703 greater. This is due to the operation of E.P.T. and also to some extent to the reserve for taxation last year having proved to be in excess of requirements.

Your directors propose that a final dividend of 20 per cent., making 35 per cent. for the year, shall be paid. The carry-forward for next year will thus be increased to £371,940. We have made the customary provision for depreciation and repairs, including provision for deferred repairs, and we have written off all capital expenditure in connection with A.R.P. works.

We provided last year our full liability for properties under the War Damage Act of 1941, but in this year's accounts we have had to provide for the insurance of chattels. Our stock, which last year totalled £1,999,680, has now been reduced to £1,279,389, and cash in hand is £1,466,273. Investments in Government securities have increased to £302,600. Advances to subsidiary companies have increased to £478,550. The major part has been invested in stock for export, and is now being steadily reduced.

Control and Export

We have maintained our policy of giving the best possible values, and we have welcomed the efforts of the Central Price Regulation Committee to steady prices. The range of our wares has been contracted, and we have concentrated on the provision of Utility goods. The extension of our price range has enabled us to achieve continuous improvements in our goods as to style, quality, and taste.

The Marks and Spencer Export Corporation has continued its operations. Our goods have found a ready market in the United States. Export is now restricted under licence, and during the coming year will be on a decreased and limited scale.

Company's Welfare Organisation

Our welfare organisation has been of considerable assistance to local authorities during periods of stress.

We have been able to divert large numbers of our women staff into Royal Ordnance factories.

The report was adopted.

Company Meeting

DUNLOP RUBBER

THE forty-third ordinary general meeting of Dunlop Rubber Co., Ltd., was held on June 10th, in London, Sir J. George Beharrell, D.S.O. (the chairman), presiding.

The following are extracts from the statement of the chairman circulated with the report and accounts.

The year 1941 saw the steadily increasing adaptation of British manufacturing industry to meet the needs of the nation's war effort. Government regulations for the limitation of supplies reduced the volume of our business in certain lines, but the demands for others were considerably expanded. The company's factories were satisfactorily occupied until the end of the year and total turnover increased, though profit margins were lower. In spite of the closing of practically all the company's European markets and steadily increasing difficulties in regard to export licences and transport, our overseas trade resulted in a fair profit. The overseas Dunlop factories outside enemy control showed satisfactory results, the Indian and South African companies and the Dunlop Tire and Rubber Corporation, of America, having record sales and trading profits. Unfortunately the extension of the war in the Far East at the end of the year changed the situation and the immediate outlook for your company.

The net profit for the year amounted to £3,186,000, compared with £3,002,000 for 1940. The provision for taxation amounts to £4,085,000 for the group as a whole. The board feels that a policy of conserving and strengthening the company's financial position is necessary, and has therefore allocated to contingencies reserve the sum of £100,000. A dividend on the ordinary stock of 8 per cent. is recommended.

As regards the Dunlop Rubber Company's balance sheet, I would like particularly to draw attention to the Special Reserve against Investments in and Advances to Subsidiary Companies, which stands at £3,250,000. This Reserve more than covers the book value of the Investments in and Advances to companies in enemy and enemy-controlled countries. It does not, however, take into account the guarantee of the 2,500,000 Preference Shares of Dunlop Plantations, Limited, which is a contingent liability of the Dunlop Rubber Company.

It is difficult to comment usefully on the outlook, but stockholders must have realised that recent events in the Far East have materially affected the company's position for the immediate future. We are doing all we can to ease the position by the extended use of reclaimed rubber, and we are benefiting by the foresight of your board in having established early last year additional plant for the retreading of tyres. It seems, however, that we must be prepared for a substantial reduction of sales, both in the home and overseas markets, and our overseas manufacturing companies will be similarly affected, some more, some less than ourselves. This situation we are endeavouring to relieve by finding useful forms of manufacture to occupy the floor space which is likely to be left empty and by economising expenditure in every possible way.

to be the real China, the Dragon's Seed. Her people are sharply charactered, real, and mostly lovable; the farmer who knows that the soil endures, and who stays to till his holding near Nanking: the son who goes away to the hills with his wife, to fight as a guerilla; the shrewd, kind mother, the city son-in-law who becomes interpreter for the puppet set-up, but takes care to transmit nothing important, especially nothing about his own family; so that the betrayals of an embittered cousin are unavailing. There are scenes of war reporting; the sack of Nanking told with sober horrifying conviction, as these people saw it; death and rape, and pillage of the people, and then the settling down to steady evasion of demands, hiding of food, killing of Japanese soldiers as the guerillas slide in and out of the village. This may be propaganda, it is, but it is moving and it rings true.

China Rediscovers her West is a symposium by Chinese Protestant Christians and American missionaries. It describes Szechuan, with its fortunate concurrence of red sandstone soil, running water, and skilled two-thousand-year-old irrigation; the migration of thirty million refugees there; relief work, teaching, evangelisation done by the Christians. The most interesting chapters from a secular point of view are perhaps "New Life for the Rural Masses," by James Yen, who ran the mass education movement in Hopei, and "Women in the War," by Dr. Wu, who is the woman head of the Protestant Churches union. The most remarkable, by far, is one by J. C. Chao, "Christian Faith in China's Struggle for Freedom." It is a synthesis of patriotism, internationalism, resolution and magnanimity: the honest application of the teaching of Christ to the war. It seems to me—though I am hardly qualified to judge—the most actual and truthful statement of our problems in terms of the Christian faith which has been made in this war; and it comes not from the Vatican, not from any of the countries of Christendom, but out of China.

FREDA WHITE

Week-end Competitions

No. 645

Set by V. S. Pritchett

Going through her husband's diaries Mrs. Nathaniel Hawthorne made many deletions in the interests of gentility and propriety; legs became limbs, bellies became rotundities. Usual prizes for the best refined versions for any fifteen lines of vigorous and well-known English verse.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, June 22nd.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 642

Set by Gwen Raverat

The usual prizes were offered for a set of three composite quotations after the model of Mr. Shaw's

There's a divinity doth hedge a king,
Rough hew him how we will.

Or: Like Caesar's wife—all things to all men.

Report by Gwen Raverat

The results of this competition were on the whole disappointing, perhaps because it was more difficult than I imagined. A good many competitors misunderstood the point; some thought that what was intended was a quotation followed by a rhyming tag of their own (generally about Hitler); some even sent examination howlers; many did not perceive that in this game it is essential that quotations should be well known; others madly crammed together any two fragments which could possibly be made to fit, ignoring the opportunity for wit, or for that divine lunacy which is the special prerogative of the mixed-quotation-monger. I give the first prize to the airy sequences of Mrs. Gimblett, with her cheerful intimations of immorality. Leslie Johnson's good average has been brought up to second-prize pitch by the charm of his dear gazelle. Only three of the other competitors had more than a single flower in their button-holes. Guy Innes has:

"It's an ill wind that cannot change his spots"
"A beggar on horseback needs a long spoon."

And Longaville has:

"First hymn they the Father
of all things, and then
The Pickwick, the Owl and the
Waverley Pen."

And also:

"Who can find a virtuous woman?"
"You know my methods, Watson."

S. J. Sharpless has:

"Is this the face that launched a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean?"

And: "A ministering angel thou, although thy breath be rude."

Towanbucket's

"Tell me not in mournful numbers
A garden is a lovesome thing"

does not characterise that abominable garden nearly strongly enough for my taste.

I like better H. F. Overy's

"Tell me not in mournful numbers
Virtue is its own reward."

Here are some other single gems:

R. S. Jaffray:

"Lives of great men all remind us
Things are seldom what they seem."

Little Billee:

"Take, oh take, those lips away;
Drink to me only with thine eyes."

H. E. M.:

"Come into the garden, Maud,
And then take hands."

Sir Robert Witt:

To the Prime Minister: "Go on, we'll follow thee,—all thy faults observed."

R. C. O.:

"In at one ear and out at the other—like water off a duck's back."

F. M. C.:

"It's a long worm that has no turning."

R. Pomfret:

"Patriotism is not enough refuge for a scoundrel."

Kentish Cob:

"And in that heaven of all their wish,
She brought forth butter in a lordly dish."

The attribution to Shaw of:

"There's a divinity doth hedge a king,
Rough hew him how we will"

has provoked several protests. It comes, in fact, from *Erewhon*.

FIRST PRIZE.

"When lovely woman stoops to folly,
Then heigh-ho, the holly,
This life is most jolly."
"I almost die for food; a horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!"
"I'm to be cock of the North, mother;
I'm to be cock of the North."

MRS. E. GIMBLETT

SECOND PRIZE.

"Swallow, my sister, O sister, swallow!
Drink, pretty creature, drink!"
"At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep"
"I never nursed a dear gazelle;
The reason why I cannot tell."

LESLIE JOHNSON

Where to Stay

OXFORD Holiday Camp. The Y.W.C.A. is opening a centre in one of the College Halls, Oxford, from August 6th to September 5th. Open to men and women. 2 *gns.* per week inclusive. All correspondence should be addressed to the Holidays Secretary, Y.W.C.A., National Offices, Central Building, Gt. Russell Street, W.C.1.

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SELF-CONTAINED Furnished flat wanted by two young war grass widows. Central London or easy reach. Box B22.

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